

Sutton-cum-Lound C E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122809
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314410
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Circuit
Headteacher	Mr Robert Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Portland Place Sutton-cum-lound Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 8PP
Telephone number	01777 705990
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the two villages of Sutton and Lound and the surrounding area. All the pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion, usually less than a tenth of the pupils, comes from the local Traveller community. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is just below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The latter has been higher, but has fallen this term. The majority of children start the school with a level of development that is in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils arriving mid-term, or leaving during the year, is high.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. A falling roll has led to reductions in staffing which has meant that all remaining personnel have had to take on extra roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, everyone works hard to ensure that all pupils enjoy a wealth of good quality educational experiences. The small size of the school guarantees that every pupil's needs are known and well catered for. The school has created and is now refining a system to target the academic development of each pupil. This is already working well for the younger pupils, and is being developed thoughtfully. The Year 6 pupils are particularly impressed by the care and accuracy with which their teacher gives them specific tasks for each lesson.

Overall, pupils' achievements and standards are satisfactory. This is because there is an inconsistent pattern to the progress pupils make. Standards are above national expectations in the Foundation Stage and above average at Key Stage 1. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are generally just in line with the national averages in most respects. Pupils achieve well in reading, but make uneven progress in the development of their writing, especially the boys. After a good start, some boys fail to make adequate progress, and, with one or two exceptions, do not develop their writing skills as quickly as the girls. Pupils enjoy science, especially the opportunities for hands-on experimentation. However, the results in end of key stage assessments show that they do not always apply their knowledge successfully. Pupils who have more difficulty in learning make similar progress to that of their peers.

The teaching has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning. There are good features which lead to better achievements in some areas. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, planning interesting lessons to meet the diverse needs of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. Information communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support and enhance the pupils' learning. The pupils are confident and knowledgeable in their use of ICT, using it well to strengthen their learning across all subjects. The curriculum is good and developing well. Teachers recognise that the pupils really enjoy independent cross-curricular working and now give them good opportunities to do this.

The headteacher sets clear direction for the work of the school. There are monitoring systems in place, but the evaluation of the school's work is too generous in some respects. The school values all pupils and ensures that the pupils from Traveller families fit into all aspects of its life and work. The governors support the school well and have an astute strategic view for its future development. The school is tackling the falling rolls in an imaginative and creative way. Sound steps have been taken to improve its work since the last inspection and it has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

An effective partnership with the local pre-school is in the process of being strengthened by bringing the provision onto the school premises. Staff make careful and detailed assessments of the children that build on the work of the pre-school. These assessments utilise the parents' knowledge of their children really well. They help staff to track children's progress and plan each step in their development. As a result, children make good, and at times outstanding progress, at times making huge leaps forward in their development. By the time they move into Year 1, most are achieving the expected levels for their age and many are achieving beyond

this. The carefully planned provision is enriched with a range of interesting and challenging tasks for the children in a well-structured environment. A stimulating variety of pictures and words, indoors and outside in the play area, help to keep children focused on what they need to learn. As a result, they revel in the freedom to choose tasks and materials that they can experiment with. As a result, they learn well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Rigorously monitor pupils' achievements to ensure better and more consistent progress, particularly in respect of writing, especially for boys.
- Ensure that pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of the work they have covered to raise standards and achievement in science.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The children's skills, knowledge and understanding at the end of their Reception year are usually above national expectations. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards are usually above average and at times exceptionally high, particularly in reading and writing. Despite this good start, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 hovers around the national average in English and mathematics. This is because pupils' progress is erratic. It is consistently good in reading, but there are wide variations in the progress of writing and mathematics from year to year. This uneven picture is particularly noticeable for the boys, whose progress in writing is markedly slower than that of most of the girls. Pupils who find learning more difficult make satisfactory progress overall. Despite the fact that pupils enjoy science, the standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are often lower than those achieved in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like school and say that it is a happy place. This is reflected in the good levels of attendance. Pupils behave well in class and clearly enjoy learning. They are thoughtful and considerate of others and the older pupils relish the responsibilities they are given. Staff give pupils many opportunities to take part in a range of different sports and visits to places of interest. This includes the opportunity for the older pupils to take part in residential visits. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The staff are keenly aware that they have to continue to work hard to broaden pupils' cultural horizons as they have limited experience of the wider world. Pupils show a good awareness of how they can keep healthy and safe and enjoy the opportunities when they can help to care for their environment. There are plenty of opportunities for them to develop their basic skills and this prepares them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The impact of the teaching on the pupils' learning varies across year groups and subjects. Where it is good, the pupils achieve well. However, despite careful monitoring, there are still many occasions when the quality of learning is only satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use the information that they have gained from assessments to plan targets that accurately tell pupils what they have to do to improve. In these lessons pupils are engaged in their learning and motivated; there is often good use of ICT and good levels of independent learning. In lessons where the level of challenge is too low, pupils' learning is slower. Teachers recognise this, and acknowledge that they need to raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Careful planning ensures that all statutory elements are properly covered and that the learning needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the mixed-age classes are met. A thoughtful approach, giving an emphasis that lets pupils learn information for themselves, ensures that they are motivated and fully engaged in their work. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well developed, but the school recognises that there is still more to do to strengthen its use in all subjects. The planned work has a clear emphasis on pupils developing their basic skills, whilst enjoying their learning. The basic curriculum is enriched with a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits, visitors and partnership arrangements with local schools. These significantly increase pupils' interest in their learning and broaden their outlook.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very inclusive school. Everybody fits in and contributes well, whatever their social, emotional, physical or academic needs. Procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are all in place. The academic guidance for pupils is developing well in many respects, although there are still occasions when the targets need to be more challenging. Pupils understand their targets, and find those that are designed for each individual and lesson particularly helpful. The good links with the local pre-school group help to give all children a good start in Reception.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the governors have a clear picture of the school's development, although their judgement about the effectiveness of its work is at times, too optimistic. They monitor the teaching well, but the quality of the school's self-evaluation process is let down by the failure to apply accurate measurements of success in order to make secure judgements. Day-to-day management of the school is good, finances are kept under tight control and money is spent wisely.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 January 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Sutton cum Lound CE School, Retford DN22 8PP

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I would like to share with you what I found when I visited your classes and talked to you and your teachers.

I was impressed by the way that you all get on well together and take very good care of each other. I liked your commitment to improving the school grounds and the fact that you are keen to get an ECO award for your school.

You told me that there is a lot for you all to do in school and I agree. For instance, I was delighted to see the children in the Foundation Stage so keen to make good use of the exciting activities that are set up for them. Then I could see that older pupils have good opportunities to work independently, and Year 6 are really keen on their individual targets.

I was very pleased to see that the standard of your work is improving. It was clear to me that you try hard. I could see how confident you were using ICT. You know what you are doing and have a lot of skills to help you with learning new things. However, although your work is getting better, and several of you told me how much you enjoyed science, I would like your teachers to find more ways to help you to apply what you learn in science to any new tasks you are given.

Whilst talking to your teachers, I could see that they have many good ideas to improve your work. However, I would really like them to spend more time developing your writing. You already make good progress with your reading, but some of you, particularly the boys, struggle to make good progress with your writing.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown

Inspector