

# John Clare Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110699
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	325201
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Killman HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	103
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Monica Packer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Fry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	West Street Helpston Peterborough PE6 7DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 252332
<b>Fax number</b>	01733 253684

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated:

- pupils' progress beyond Reception
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from assessment data; the school's records and documents; parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire; observation of the school at work; scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but, with the exception of care, guidance and support which was over-generously evaluated, the team found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are White British. A small minority of pupils speak a language other than English at home. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is broadly typical in all areas of learning. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Each year group is reasonably small varying from nine pupils in the smallest to 19 in the largest. The proportion of pupils with learning, behavioural, communication and/or sensory difficulties is below average. However, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is double the national average. The school has achieved national awards for promoting healthy lifestyles, the arts and sustainable environments. Childcare provision on the school site is managed by an independent provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

## 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 and improving school with some good and outstanding features. Its capacity to improve further is also satisfactory. Following the last inspection in 2006, the school encountered a period of significant turbulence in staffing at all levels. This resulted in a loss of momentum in school improvement and contributed to a significant dip in standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 in the 2008 national tests and assessments. In recognition that pupils' progress was uneven across the school and that standards required swift recovery, the school has taken effective restorative action. Since September 2008, the school has 'turned a corner' and the pace of change is accelerating. Several worthwhile developments have taken place, particularly in restructuring the school's curricular leadership, establishing robust systems to check and measure progress, improving attendance, establishing a clear vision for the school, and developing the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and the library. Work in these areas has borne fruit. All staff and governors are committed to the improvement agenda and the school's latest assessment information indicates that most pupils are back on track to achieve above average standards this summer. The children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach expectations which are above average. However, in both Key Stage 1 and 2 progress is satisfactory rather than good and this leads to pupils maintaining their above average standards.

The school runs smoothly on a daily basis. Governance is good because governors fulfil effectively their role as critical friends. The school is ahead of many others in planning for and taking positive action to promote community cohesion. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet the latest government requirements and guidance towards good practice. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses but in monitoring its effectiveness there has not always been sufficient focus on the impact of the school's work on learning. This is why some self-evaluations are overly generous.

The headteacher and the assistant headteacher are passionate about pupils' achieving all they can in relation to their individual needs and capabilities, and plans for school improvement are starting to take effect. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Many parents hold the headteacher in high regard for his knowledge of individual pupils and 'his exciting plans to develop the school'. Historically, pupils' progress has been consistently uneven across the school leading to late intervention at the end of Key Stage 2 and satisfactory rather than good progress overall. To remedy this, the leadership team has introduced a good system of regular checks between Years 1 and 6. All staff assess and monitor pupils' progress regularly, setting them challenging targets that are revised mid-year, if necessary.

The assessment information is used effectively to personalise learning and accommodate individual pupils' needs, special gifts and talents. For example, one pupil with demonstrable talent in singing receives individual support with a specialist teacher; a group of pupils with identified physical coordination needs starts school early for a sensory circuit session; and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given individualised tasks, relating to their education plans, to complete in lessons. This approach to supporting learning is indicative of the school's inclusive ethos and contributes to pupils' obvious enjoyment of school, as seen in their excellent attendance and zero exclusion rates. 'Our children love going to school and are distraught if they are ill and cannot attend,' is a telling comment by a parent. This term, pupils are making markedly better progress in some year groups. In others there is a legacy of underachievement to overcome but green shoots of success are beginning to show. Most

parents appreciate all that the school provides, describing it as 'an excellent, family-friendly school' and 'a really enjoyable place for children to learn'. Inspectors agree that there is much enrichment for pupils to look forward to in the good curriculum, such as special theme weeks, clubs, visits and visitors and a summer term swimming programme. Provision for the arts, sports and ICT are also strong features. However, inspectors also agree with a small minority of parents who consider that their children should achieve more in academic subjects. Initiatives have been taken to add challenge and purpose to the core curriculum. For example, the new approach to improve pupils' extended writing is leading to a rise in standards.

Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers manage their classrooms effectively. They are well-organised and lessons have a clear structure. Teachers are becoming more precise in their assessments of pupils' learning so that they are able to pinpoint exactly what they need to learn next. Nonetheless, this information is not always shared well enough with pupils through consistently helpful guidance in marking, discussion and reminders about targets in lessons, or visual references to show progression so that pupils can see where their learning journey is leading. Curricular planning caters for the learners' differing needs and abilities. However, the match is not always precise enough to ensure that they are all suitably challenged because, in some cases, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Similarly, the quality of presentation and handwriting in pupils' work are below expectations because they are accepted too readily. Teachers deploy teaching assistants very effectively to provide sensitive and unobtrusive support for individuals and groups of pupils ensuring their success in keeping up with the others. All staff are encouraging, caring and supportive; relationships are strong and pupils are responsive to guidance they are offered. Pastoral care for all pupils is good. Good use is made of ICT to support learning.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school, which exemplifies their good personal development. They display good attitudes and are well disposed to learning. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is also good. They are keen to take on responsibility and make an excellent contribution to the community and the smooth running of the school. Their understanding of cultural issues, the role of charities and sponsorship is excellent. Racist incidents and bullying are rare but treated seriously and reported to governors. The pupils' understanding of how to stay safe is exemplary and their knowledge of healthy lifestyles is good. All pupils develop good social and learning skills that successfully equip them for their transfer to secondary school and for their future lives.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

All the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements are fully met. The children are in a mixed-age class with some Year 1 pupils. The good teaching ensures that this arrangement has no adverse effect on provision for both age groups.

Provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because the lead teacher knows how young children learn best. From broadly typical starting points the children make good progress in Reception. The majority reach or exceed national expectations. Throughout the year staff keep a watchful eye on children's progress and use this information to plan the next steps. Learning builds securely on what the children already know and can do. The learning logs show images and other records of every child's continuous good progress. The limited space inside the classroom has not become a barrier to good provision. There is a broad range of well-designed play activities that encourage children to develop new skills, practise and revisit those already learnt, freely explore, investigate, imagine, rehearse, experiment, take

risks and make choices. Outdoor play is challenging and full of exciting activities, including weaving, digging, climbing and using wheeled toys, to try on a variety of surfaces. Adult-led activities, such as the daily teaching of letter sounds, equip the children with the skills they require as emerging readers and writers. Arrangements for pupils' welfare and safety are good. The children are encouraged to do as much as they are able for themselves so that they thrive as independent, confident and happy learners.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Achieve greater consistency in the rate of pupils' progress in every year group so that all pupils reach standards worthy of their capabilities.
- Raise expectations and ensure that pupils are guided securely to improve, through precise and accurate assessment.
- Re-focus monitoring activities, placing more emphasis on outcomes for learners, to achieve greater accuracy in school self-evaluation.

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

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Clare Primary School, Helpston, PE6 7DU

You may remember that two inspectors recently visited your school to see how well you are learning. We were impressed by many things, especially you! We think that you are well-behaved and polite. We liked the way that you take your responsibilities seriously and are always mindful to keep yourselves safe. You and many of your parents told us that you enjoy school. We can certainly see why. You are well looked after and have many exciting activities to look forward to. Many of you have an excellent understanding of different cultures, faiths and customs and you are learning what it is like to live in places beyond Helpston. This is helping you to understand, appreciate and respect the differences in people's lives.

The youngest children have lots of challenging things to do that help them to learn quickly in Reception. Your attitudes to learning are good and you enjoy it. This is why we think that some of you in older years can achieve even more especially in English, mathematics and science. This is why we have asked your school to:

- make sure that every year you learn as much as you can, as fast as you are able
- explain more clearly what you need to learn next so that you know what you are aiming for and how to improve
- check that new ways of working are helping you to learn all that you should.

You have a super setting in which to learn. Your headteacher is always keen to do his very best for you. Your teachers work hard, care about you and want to see you do well. Your parents support you and the school brilliantly. The stage is set for you to excel and you can help to make this happen by always trying your best and taking pride in your written work.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman

Her Majesty's Inspector