

# St Nicholas Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118050
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston-upon-Hull
<b>Inspection number</b>	326751
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Bennetts

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)	196
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>	Dr John Howarth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Beryl Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 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>	Cottingham Road Hull HU6 7RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 444215
<b>Fax number</b>	01482 494453

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 February 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Nicholas' Primary School is slightly smaller than average, but the number of pupils has risen by about 20% over the last two years. It became a community school in 2007 after many years as a Voluntary Aided School. The school's historical link with the Sailors' Families Society, a charity looking after vulnerable children, has promoted its reputation for caring for such children. Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds from across the city of Hull. Most pupils are of White British heritage. About one in five is from a minority ethnic background. The school welcomes pupils who have recently arrived from various parts of Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of the world. The proportion of such pupils has increased rapidly over the last few years, with many pupils joining the school at other than the normal times. Some, having joined, leave again as their families move on to other destinations; there is high mobility. An above average proportion of the pupils has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average; so too is the number with statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is higher than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Nicholas' Primary School is a good school. It provides outstanding care and, by the time they leave, pupils have made outstanding headway in their personal development. Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class and pupils' overall achievement through the school is good. The school's leadership has a passionate vocation to ensure that every child matters. One parent said, reflecting the views of others, that this is 'a happy, caring, friendly school that supports the "whole child" socially, academically and emotionally'.

Pupils' personal development is a great strength of the school. Pupils blossom in response to the all embracing care and support they meet at every turn. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. They are extremely keen to take advice on keeping healthy and taking care of themselves. They make a vigorous contribution to school life and beyond, with pupils enjoying every minute of school life. Attendance is satisfactory. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 are sometimes slow to settle, behaviour is very good amongst older pupils. With their very mature approaches and positive development of key skills such as numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. Pupils make good progress in the Reception class from starting points that are well below the levels expected at this age. In Key Stage 1, progress falters, although recent action has arrested this and standards, particularly in mathematics, have risen. Progress is often good in Key Stage 2 and the school has recently exceeded its challenging targets. Although positive action has improved pupils' writing, this remains a relative weakness. Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory although much is now good due to actions taken by the school's leadership. Inconsistencies remain however, and where this occurs it reduces the overall quality of learning. The best lessons engage pupils' enthusiasm and are buoyed up by good relationships. Learning flourishes best in the Reception class. In Key Stage 1, while the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress there are signs of improvement because teachers are routinely demanding more of pupils. Effective action by the school has improved the numbers of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6. However, lessons throughout Key Stage 2 do not always offer enough challenge to pupils of higher ability. The vibrant curriculum and extra-curricular activities meet pupils' needs and ensure their positive attitudes and enjoyment of school life. These factors are combining well and are making an increasingly positive contribution to improved pupil progress. There is effective support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school is led with vigour and with a central focus on the well-being and wide development of every pupil. There has been outstanding success in establishing a culture of care and tolerance: a wholesome ethos in which children grow up well. The school has made significant improvements in the provision for pupils and this is reflected in the clear signs of rising standards in the Reception class and elsewhere. Much has been achieved, yet work remains to be done to ensure that learning and progress are always as good as they can be throughout the school. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children join the Reception class with skills typically well below average for their age. This is especially so for speaking and listening, personal and social skills, physical development and

creative work. Children make good progress and by the end of Reception they are working at levels much closer to those expected of children of their age in all areas of learning.

Good induction procedures help children and parents settle into routines. Parents are delighted, typically saying: 'What more could we ask for?' They are overwhelmingly supportive of the outstanding attention paid to children's well-being and welfare.

The curriculum meets all needs. Good teamwork provides well planned teacher-led activities which always have a practical element that appeals to children. For example, counting to 10 was done by paying for a plate of food with pennies (or US dollars and Saudi riyals, as several well travelled children requested), or actually making a hat while in the midst of a guided reading task. Children are comfortable moving from one activity to another; they are confident working indoors and outside.

Leadership and management are good. Children's progress is recorded meticulously both formally and informally. Their learning is moved on as their skills develop. Children leave Reception well prepared for Year 1. Their personal development is outstanding. They change quickly for physical activities, learn to take turns, and use their imagination well in role-play.

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

- Improve the rate of progress in Key Stage 1
- Improve the quality of writing in Key Stage 2.
- Improve teachers' expectations of pupils in order to raise standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typically well below average for their age. By the end of Year 6 pupils, reach broadly average standards. Progress overall is good, although the rates of progress vary through the school. Over time, the results in the Key Stage 1 national assessments have been significantly below average. However, the underlying trend is now one of improvement and results from tests taken in 2008, particularly in mathematics, provide further confirmation of this positive change. Pupils' current work shows standards much closer to average levels. The school's data show that pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1 although there are some variations in the pace of learning.

Past school data shows that progress in Key Stage 2 has been satisfactory over time, but effective school action has now improved this. The most recent Year 6 test results exceeded the challenging targets set by the school, including raising the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Successful action has led to improvements in pupils' writing, although this remains a relative weakness. Progress in lessons is often good, though again, classroom methods are not always the most efficient. Good progress is particularly promoted by excellent relationships and pupils' accelerating maturity. Overall progress in ICT and physical education is strong throughout the school. There is good artwork, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good support and make as much headway as others.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop into mature and responsible young people. They cherish their school and the fact that 'we are one big family here'.

Pupils reflect thoughtfully on their feelings and how a kind word can have a huge impact. A strong sense of right and wrong underpins their good behaviour. By celebrating the wide range of countries that pupils come from, they gain a clear understanding of the diversity of Britain. Pupils enjoy working together. An excellent Key Stage 1 assembly gave pupils opportunities to express their clear understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and diet.

Bullying and racist incidents are rare and are dealt with quickly. Pupils have excellent understanding of keeping safe, and the importance of daily exercise. To this end, a group of school councillors questioned city officials about drainage problems on the adventure trail in the school grounds. Pupils have huge enthusiasm for all the clubs and activities offered, many of which they help to organise themselves. A successful Valentine's disco, with refreshments provided by a Year 4 enterprise initiative, reflected this admirably. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite some continuing weaknesses in pupils' writing, pupils' positive attitudes and good development in ICT and some other key skills prepare them well for secondary school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although much is good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Elsewhere teaching is increasingly effective but in some lessons not enough is expected of pupils. The best teaching is characterised by excellent relationships, with pupils spurred on to achieve by their teachers' encouragement. For example, Year 4 pupils carried responsibility for the production of 'trillions' of fruit kebabs for the afternoon disco; they then wrote about it speedily and they counted the money with diligence. Information and communication technology is often used effectively to add interest to learning as well as extend skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils are sometimes restless and expectations of their attention and productivity are not always vigorous enough. In Key Stage 2, a few lessons do not challenge the most able enough, because work is not sufficiently matched to individual need. Good methods are often used, but occasionally the approach is not the most effective – for example, to improve pupils' use of language and sentence structure in writing. Small group sessions on phonics are helpful, though the provision is not always as well focused as it might be.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides a vibrant and outstanding curriculum. The previous inspection reported that 'it is evolving in the true spirit of excellence and enjoyment'. This has continued. Pupils are often enthused by exciting opportunities and these have a very positive impact on pupils' desire to learn. The curriculum is contributing successfully to pupils' improving achievement through the school. Teachers establish creative links between subjects so that a range of activities is drawn together with common focus – for example, in learning about enterprise. This is successfully widening pupils' experiences and enhancing their preparation for future

learning and the world of work. This is a major stimulus to learning. Some subjects are taught by specialists to enhance quality. Recently, pupils joined with an author to produce a highly acclaimed book on the abolition of slavery. Pupils in Year 5 were seen receiving excellent expert advice on bicycle and road safety, which they valued highly. Pupils learn French, and enjoy learning the rudiments of sign language. They relish the wealth of sporting, musical and other extra-curricular opportunities. Standards are high in the well attended chess club. Pupils love the trips that the school arranges. They say the parties are fantastic. The imaginative and entrepreneurial curriculum provides a high quality all-round education – and lots of fun.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil to provide outstanding pastoral care and support. Parents value 'the strong sense of community and family', likening St Nicholas' to a 'village school based in the city'. All child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Other health and safety measures, validated during the inspection by an outside audit, are fully in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those learning English as an additional language, receive sensitive and effective support. This enables them to play a full part in the daily life of the school. One parent said that 'everything possible has been put in place to meet our child's needs'. The school uses outside agencies extremely well to promote pupils' welfare and progress. There is an effective system for keeping track of pupils' progress and relating it to expectations from their earlier standards. This provides a very good basis from which to identify those who are underachieving and target support successfully on their specific needs. The school has used this information effectively to identify, address and improve areas such as the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is led with unstinting dedication. It now provides a very wide range of opportunities for its pupils who come from communities with many and diverse needs. The welfare of pupils, and in turn the welfare of the community that the school serves, is at the heart of the school's mission and its promotion of community cohesiveness. This dimension of the school's work is audited and evaluated scrupulously. The school does everything possible to give all pupils an equal chance, whatever their background, or whatever barriers to learning they may have – all pupils benefit from outstanding personal development. One parent said: 'There are many children from different cultures, and difference is celebrated'. The school's commitment to this global awareness is clear from displays of where different pupils came from and a wide range of faiths. As part of its work on promoting community cohesion, the school fosters strong links with schools elsewhere in England and overseas. The governors have a shrewd appreciation of how things stand in the school and work closely with the headteacher to improve provision. The school is resourceful in accessing funding opportunities, offers of help and the support of other services. Teaching assistants are generally deployed to best advantage and resources are used to provide good value for money. Improvements in all issues raised in the last report have been made since the previous inspection. The school's good self-evaluation means that it has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Recent improvements, for example in mathematics, and in the higher rates of progress now being made by pupils, demonstrate

that measures are having a positive impact. The school has good capacity for further improvement.



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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

<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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

16 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas' Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU6 7RH

Inspectors greatly enjoyed their visit to your school. We think that St Nicholas' is a good school and that a number of the things it does are outstanding.

It looks after you all very well, and there is a wide range of exciting things to do as additional activities. Though some of the younger ones can be a little slow to settle in lessons, you grow up to be really mature and confident young people by the time you leave. Young children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Most pupils have made good progress by the time they reach Year 6. Whilst many lessons are good, learning could sometimes be more effective. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. The school is well run and the school does its very best to take care of you all.

Though this is a good school, we have asked that pupils in Key Stage 1 are given help to do a little better in their learning, and that older pupils are helped to improve their writing skills. We have asked the school to consider ways to make what goes on in lessons more effective.

You can help to make this good school even better. The young ones should try to concentrate well all the time. Older ones should let teachers know if they don't understand how to improve their work, or if the work is actually too easy.

You have a good school, where everyone is happy. You enjoy school greatly. You have a school to be proud of. With your help, it can go from strength to strength.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Lead inspector