

Scotter Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120473
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327292
Inspection date	17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	278
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev William Keast
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth McCaffery
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Scotter Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 3RY
Telephone number	01724762259
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the consistency of progress of pupils as they move through the school with a particular focus on boys and the more able
- the effectiveness of teaching and provision in ensuring that good progress is the norm from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6
- the sharpness of target setting and tracking of pupils' progress and the involvement of pupils in their own learning
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work and performance of the school.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, sampling of pupils' work, scrutiny of school documentation, assessment, tracking and target setting data and information. Discussions were held with the headteacher, pupils, teachers, the chair of governors and the school's improvement partner. An analysis of parental questionnaires was also carried out. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its revised self-evaluation were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Scotter is a little larger than average primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the picture found nationally although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is a little above. These pupils have, for example, moderate or specific learning difficulties. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class and a Reception and Year 1 mixed class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher has been in post almost 12 months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Scotter is a good school. Pupils leave the school as well-rounded individuals who are more than ready to face the next challenges of their educational lives. The success of the school owes much to the good quality of provision, leadership, particularly that of the headteacher and the tremendous zest for learning of the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because some of the identified areas for improvement had not been tackled with sufficient rigour until the appointment of the present headteacher. The last twelve months has seen a major acceleration in the speed and effectiveness with which areas for development have been addressed. For example, significant improvements in assessment, target setting and holding teachers to account for pupil progress, have seen an increase in attainment levels by the end of Year 6. Subject leaders are becoming more effective at monitoring and evaluating teaching and standards. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving well but remains work in progress. These improvements, together with a shared commitment, vision and determination amongst many staff to move the school to the next level, indicate a good capacity to improve.

Attainment on entry is broadly in line with what is expected for children's age, although some year groups are a little higher. Although better in some aspects of learning this year, children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because over time, activities planned have lacked excitement and vibrancy and not been tailored well enough to how young children learn best. This situation is changing for the better. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been consistently above the national average overall. Although standards have been significantly above the national average at Year 6, the number of pupils reaching better than expected levels was higher in 2004 to 2006 than in 2007 and 2008. Inspection evidence and accurate school data indicates that standards this year are set to improve on the 2008 results with a high percentage of pupils reaching above the levels expected of 11-year-olds. All this shows that pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress overall and achieve well given their starting points. At times, the progress is not as consistent as it could be, however, particularly for the most able. Progress is best for the oldest pupils in the school and those with learning difficulties make good progress across the school.

Teaching is good. At times it is outstanding but some remains at a satisfactory level. Across the school, relationships are very good and teachers manage pupils well. When teaching is at its best there is terrific pace and vibrancy to the lessons, expectations are high and pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are given exciting tasks where they have to find out things for themselves or carry out investigative and problem-solving tasks. In these instances, learning moves along at a cracking pace, the tempo never drops and pupils are up for the challenge from the start to the end. When teaching does not reach these heights, it is because lessons are a little flat, lack urgency and high challenge or there is too much teacher talk when pupils are eager to get on with the tasks. The headteacher has introduced very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress. The best teaching makes excellent use of this assessment information to plan work that closely matches the ability levels of the pupils, particularly in the level of challenge for the most able. However, this practice is not prevalent enough.

The curriculum is good because it provides opportunities for pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to progress and develop well. Pupils are given the opportunity to learn French and there is a strong commitment to sport and to helping pupils follow healthy and safe lives. Pupils'

personal, social, emotional and health education is addressed well. All these characteristics are in addition to the good provision that is made for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. There are some excellent examples of pupils putting these skills to good use in other subjects such as history, science and design and technology. The weaker aspect of the curriculum lies in the opportunities provided for pupils to learn more about a culturally diverse society, national and global issues and communities beyond their immediate one. While there is a satisfactory range of after school clubs and a residential visit, opportunities to enrich learning through visits, visitors and other first-hand experiences are more limited. A strength of the school is undoubtedly the pupils and this is reflected in their good personal development. Pupils are highly motivated, fervent about doing well and show extremely positive attitudes, even when teaching is a little mundane. They are polite, mature and articulate individuals who have a good grasp of right and wrong and genuinely care for and look out for one another. Pupils' awareness of differing faiths and cultures is a little patchy. Behaviour is good and pupils have a good awareness of what is needed to keep healthy and safe, including safe use of the internet. Pupils love coming to school and this is evident in the consistently good attendance rates. Pupils contribute much to the school community through the school council, fund raising activities and many monitorial tasks. They are involved in activities such as litter clearing in the local community. They are right in their assertion that they are more than ready to take on greater responsibilities both in school and in the local community. Care, guidance and support are good. This is a school where pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Pupils say that bullying is rare and swiftly dealt with if it occurs. They say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns whatsoever. They have a voice that is listened to and as one pupil said, 'If we come up with ideas or concerns, the headteacher makes sure things get done'. Pastoral care is a high priority and good links with outside support agencies as well as the school's own internal mechanisms mean that pupils experiencing learning or emotional difficulties receive good support. Safeguarding requirements are met. Older pupils have a good awareness of their academic targets and the levels they are working at. They are developing good skills in assessing their work and setting targets for improvement. Although there is still work to be done in ensuring a higher level of consistency, marking of pupils' work is improving because better guidance on what is needed for pupils to improve is being increasingly highlighted. Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good because she has very quickly, accurately and astutely identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school. More importantly she has tackled them in a robust manner and set challenging targets to bring about quite significant improvements. She is a realist and knows that there is still work to be done to take the school on to the next level. She has brought many staff with her on this journey and enjoys strong, committed and able support from the assistant headteachers. Subject leaders have been empowered to play a more effective role in helping to raise standards, although the school recognises further training is needed to hone their monitoring and data analysis skills. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and committed to the school. They are re-establishing links with subject leaders and through school performance information provided by the headteacher are asking more searching questions. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has sought to engage and reach out and involve parents, other schools and support agencies. Many parents are happy with all aspects of the school's work. Some parents expressed concern about the progress their children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is an area that is being rigorously addressed by the school. Leaders have also accurately identified the need to raise pupils' awareness of their place in a nationally and globally diverse society and to audit their success.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Weaknesses identified at the last inspection had not been addressed with sufficient rigour until this year. Although there is still work to be done, provision is improving and the current satisfactory progress of children is getting stronger. In areas such as letters and sounds, progress is good. Standards are currently a little above the levels expected for children of this age. Teaching is satisfactory but better when there is a good balance between activities that are child initiated but have a structure and more teacher led tasks. Some tasks are too formal and do not reflect how young children learn best. Children's personal development is satisfactory. Children behave well and share resources amicably. Levels of independence and concentration are not as well developed, particularly among boys. The range of exciting activities on offer is increasing but is still not embedded to ensure good progress is the norm. The care and welfare of all children is given a high priority and this helps them feel safe and secure. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The lead teacher has only been in post for a few months but is making a difference. She has identified precisely the areas that need to be addressed. These rightly include ensuring provision is matched to how young children learn best, making the best use of accommodation both indoors and outdoors and further training and observation in other settings for staff less experienced than herself.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by consistently providing exciting and stimulating activities that are geared to how young children learn best.
- Ensure all teachers make best use of assessment information to plan tasks and activities that closely align with pupils' abilities, particularly the more able.
- Embed a curriculum that provides ample first hand experiences, as well as other activities and projects, to enable pupils to learn about cultural and communal diversity and national and global issues.

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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?	2
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	3
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 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Scotter Primary School, Scotter, DN21 3RY

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. You were all so helpful and polite and made our visit a very enjoyable one. I would like to say thank you to all the children we had a chance to talk to and an especially big thank you to the Year 6 pupils who I had a terrific conversation with. It was great to hear how much you enjoy school, how you feel that Scotter is such a safe and good place to learn and that bullying is seldom an issue. It is reassuring to know that there is always somebody you can talk to if you have any problems. You have a good understanding of what is needed to keep fit and healthy and I agree with you that you are more than ready to take on even more tasks and responsibilities in school and beyond.

Discussions with some of you clearly suggested that you feel Scotter is a good school. Your judgements are spot on! Good teaching helps you to make good progress, achieve well and reach high standards by the time you leave. Teachers and other staff take good care of you and provide you with many varied learning activities. Mrs McCaffery leads the school very well and, along with many other staff, is determined to make it even better. There is one strength of the school I have not mentioned yet and that is you, the children. Your attitudes to learning and school are first class, you behave well and you are very courteous. Well done! Even good schools like yours can improve and so I have asked Mrs McCaffery, the staff and governors to:

- make the learning for the youngest children in school more fun and exciting so that they always make good progress
- make sure teachers always plan lessons that are challenging, especially for those children that find learning easy
- provide more visits, visitors and other activities and projects that will help you learn more about different faiths, cultures and the world beyond Scotter.

Thank you once again for your help. I know you will want to play your part in helping the school to be even better by continuing to show infectious enthusiasm, working hard and attending as regularly as you do now. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Yours faithfully

Martin Newell

Lead inspector