

Boston Staniland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120503
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327296
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	356
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	Mrs Carole Shephard
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Peck Avenue Boston Lincolnshire PE21 8DF
Telephone number	01205 365527
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school in Boston, Lincolnshire. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. While the number of pupils at the early stages of learning English is slightly below the national average, this has recently increased, with most of these pupils coming from Eastern European backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has undergone considerable changes in staffing during the last two years and there is an interim headteacher and temporary leadership team. There are advanced plans for the school to become part of an existing school federation from April 2009. The school holds Basic Skills and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Although children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress, this is not maintained and achievement in the rest of the school is inadequate. Standards at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally low. The majority of pupils are not attaining as well as they should because too few reach higher levels in their work and progress overall is inconsistent.

Underachievement has been evident for some years and there are large gaps in the knowledge of many pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6. Recently staff have begun to address some of the root causes of this underachievement and there is a greater focus on identifying and tackling concerns. However, this is at an early stage and the low levels of basic reading, writing and mathematics skills mean that pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stages of learning.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The large majority behave well and enjoy practical activities such as art and mathematics. The whole-school focus on improving behaviour ensures most pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including at playtimes. School council duties and roles such as play leaders enable pupils to make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. Many can identify the features of a healthy lifestyle but there is much work to be done to persuade pupils of the benefit of healthy packed lunches. Attendance is below national averages and affected by the persistent non-attendance of a very small minority.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are inadequate. While the teaching in individual lessons is occasionally good, too much teaching is inadequate and does not challenge the pupils consistently enough. There are gaps in pupils' learning. Though the planning of lessons is often detailed, the activities provided do not challenge those of different abilities well enough. Curriculum planning is now based on national guidance for literacy and numeracy, but pupils' key skills are not always developed in a consistent manner, including in information and communication technology.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are inadequate. The day-to-day care and support provided by teachers and teaching assistants are satisfactory. Pupils with additional needs are supported effectively, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. However, pupils are not always supervised well enough at playtimes and lunchtimes. While the school has recently improved arrangements for checking and tracking progress, the information available is not used well enough to ensure an adequate match of tasks to pupils' abilities.

Leadership and management are inadequate and have been considerably affected by continuing significant staff changes. Therefore many of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection remain. The interim headteacher has worked with determination and some success to provide stability and calm in a period of great uncertainty. In the last few years the school has been involved in a host of initiatives to raise standards. However, this has led to a lack of clarity over priorities and how these are to be systematically addressed. The school is now well supported by those working in advisory roles. However, the school's own monitoring of teaching

and learning is generous at times and does not always identify exactly what needs to be improved. Therefore, the school is not able to secure the capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory. Staff work well together as a Foundation Stage unit and co-operate effectively in joint planning to meet the needs of the children. Staff have worked successfully to extend the range of activities selected by children while maintaining a balance with adult-led tasks, including the teaching of letter sounds. There are effective systems to assess what children know and can do and the progress that they make. Children enter the school with skills that are often well below those expected nationally in their personal, social and emotional development, their ability to communicate with others and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Their skills in other areas are slightly higher. However, many are initially very quiet and lack confidence. The satisfactory range of activities indoors and outside enables them to make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, when they enter Year 1, their skills are below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Temporary staff are working hard to meet the needs of the children and staff are effective in providing continuity of care. However, the learning environment in some areas lacks vibrancy and staff occasionally miss opportunities to stimulate children's imagination or develop a greater interest in words.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by planning work that is more accurately matched to pupils' different learning needs.
- Ensure that when pupils receive written advice about how to improve their work it is followed up by teachers.
- Ensure that the quality of curriculum planning, teaching and learning is such that it allows pupils to progress their basic skills to a higher level.
- Ensure that school leaders prioritise initiatives, and rigorously monitor and systematically evaluate the work of the school in order to identify what else needs to be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children do not meet all the goals expected for their age in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills that are below those expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6 they make variable progress year to year, which is inadequate overall. Information from assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 shows that standards have been low over some time, have fallen even further in recent years and are currently exceptionally low. Assessment information and a sample of recent work show that too few pupils reach higher than expected levels and often do not maintain the progress they made in their early years. This occurs in English, mathematics, science and particularly in writing, where few pupils currently do well. While the school has a good range of resources, it has not prioritised well enough the teaching of higher level skills, including in writing. Pupils' achievement overall is inadequate. This includes the achievement of boys and girls and those learning English as an additional language. The exception is pupils with identified learning difficulties. They often make satisfactory progress because they receive well-organised and effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall, but is not consistently strong enough to help improve their academic progress to any significant extent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory and the school is successful in helping pupils improve their social skills. The large majority of pupils enjoy school, want to learn and often try hard. Their behaviour is now better than in the recent past, as reflected in the sharp decline in pupil exclusions over the last year and the absence of any challenging behaviour evident in the lessons observed. However, though attendance rates are slightly improved, they are still too low, largely due to the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. Poor punctuality causes significant disruption to a small minority of pupils' learning. The school acknowledges this and is addressing the challenge by working closely with the families concerned. Pupils feel safe and secure. They understand how to lead healthy lives but do not always put this into practice, for example by opting to take part in many of the sports clubs open to them. They take responsibilities given to them very seriously and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Their preparation for the next phase of their education, and for adulthood, is restricted for many by shortcomings in their basic academic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although there are pockets of good practice, most teaching is not enabling pupils to make sufficient progress and achieve all that they can. Teachers provide attractive classroom displays, including information to help pupils work but staff and pupils do not refer to them often enough to make the effort worthwhile. Too little of pupils' work is displayed to give them an incentive to improve. Teachers and pupils get on well together. Pupils are prepared to try but are too easily satisfied with their first efforts. Teachers' planning is detailed but concentrates on what pupils will do rather than what they will learn and the match of work to pupils' abilities is too often inadequate. Marking identifies pupils' mistakes but does not lead to improvement because teachers do not check that the advice has been followed. Assessments of what pupils need to do next are not precise enough and do not help teachers focus their teaching effectively. At the end of most lessons, time is lost on pupils repeating to the class what they have learned in their group, which has little relevance to others. In a minority of lessons, teachers intervene effectively in pupils' group work by asking searching questions to promote further learning, but this strategy is not prevalent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is not enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. Teachers use national guidance to plan work but are not fashioning it to fit the needs of all its pupils accurately. In a few classes this is not the case and pupils' progress is improving, but this is not consistent even though teachers are planning their work together in year groups. The sequential development of pupils' skills and understanding is weak and has been affected by staff changes. The result is that there are significant gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The school has established a satisfactory range of clubs, visits and visitors to widen pupils' learning experiences with, for example, exciting drumming workshops.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

While the care, guidance and support of pupils are inadequate overall, there are some satisfactory systems in place for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. For instance, staff monitor pupils' attendance carefully, though it remains inadequate. Teachers effectively encourage vulnerable pupils who support others at home, which helps build the pupils' self-esteem. The school has recently reintroduced hot lunches, which are much appreciated by the pupils. Staff monitor and promote good behaviour and have sharply reduced the number of temporary exclusions, however the supervision of pupils at playtimes is sometimes barely adequate for the number of pupils. Staff at lunchtimes give little help to pupils to improve their manners and social skills and there is little seating or games equipment to encourage social development and co-operative play. The school has recently introduced a system for tracking pupils' academic progress. This is beginning to be used to set targets for pupils to achieve. However the system is used inconsistently and continuing inaccuracies in assessing pupils' progress cause further difficulties. Information from assessments is not fully used to challenge all pupils and is not effective in ensuring faster progress. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported satisfactorily, which helps them make adequate progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. School leaders have been successful in providing an attractive and welcoming environment for all. The interim headteacher has worked hard to try and bring stability in a time of significant staff turnover, when all other leadership posts were affected by temporary arrangements. These actions have not brought stability and so improvement has been slow. Leaders have attempted to develop the pupils' understanding of their own and other communities but as in other areas, this has been affected by multiple staffing changes. The number of parents responding to the inspection questionnaire was exceptionally low and the school recognises there is much work to be done to involve parents more in their children's education.

The school has many carefully considered plans for the next phase of development but these are not yet secured, fully in place or impacting positively on the quality of provision and pupils' learning. The school has been supported by external agencies through the Local Authority. These links have been valuable in rightly identifying gaps in the quality of provision and defining areas for improvement. However, the school's own systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning, teaching and learning lack evaluative rigour and have not provided a firm enough steer to identify priorities that will lead to improvement. Governance is currently inadequate because governors have not yet developed rigorous enough systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. However, with a new and well informed chair of governors, new committees and an evolving sense of purpose, there is now a more clearly defined path for governors to pursue.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

5 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Boston Staniland Primary School, Boston, PE21 8DF

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed speaking to you and meeting you in lessons, at break and lunchtimes, in assembly and when we spoke to the school council.

Some of the best things we found in your school were that:

- most of you behave well and like coming to school
- the school is an attractive and welcoming place
- the school helps you to become more confident and understand how to be healthy and keep safe
- children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle to school happily and make satisfactory progress.

We have decided that the school is not doing as well as it should and needs some extra help. We have asked the school leaders to:

- help you make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that your work is not too hard or too easy for you
- ensure that staff check what is happening in school more carefully so that they identify what the important things are to be improved.

Other inspectors will be regularly visiting the school to check on progress.

You can help your school to do better by always working hard, and making sure you come to school regularly and on time.

I wish you all the very best for the future, and would like to thank you once again on behalf of the team of inspectors.

Yours faithfully

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector