

The Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School, Grantham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120600
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327320
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	177
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	Mr Robert Hearmon
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Hilton
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sandon Road Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 9AZ
Telephone number	01476 564112
Fax number	01476 564112

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. Pupils' home circumstances vary, with a very small minority coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Most pupils are White British but a few are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Portuguese, Filipino and Turkish are the languages most commonly spoken in these pupils' homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The headteacher joined the school as deputy headteacher in September 2008. She became acting headteacher in October and her position was made substantive in March 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils' achievement and personal development are good and the school provides well for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many parents are full of praise for the school and often remark that their children are extremely happy here. Pupils confirm this view, with comments such as, 'It's fantastic!' and 'I wouldn't change anything'.

One reason why pupils enjoy school so enormously is that they feel safe and know that they can always turn to adults, confident that they will be listened to and helped. Their certainty is justified, because the school provides good quality care and support. From pupils' own point of view, the main thing is that 'school is really fun!'. Leaders and staff work very hard and successfully to provide a rich and relevant curriculum. Although it is good overall, the curriculum has some exceptional features, including the extensive range of highly popular lunchtime and after-school clubs. From African dance and recorders to cooking and cheerleading, there is something to appeal to all tastes. Pupils develop new accomplishments, learn to use their leisure time constructively, and practise their social skills as they enjoy working and playing with children they may not know well. Many pupils take part enthusiastically in sports clubs such as cricket, football and tennis, indicating their readiness to be active and healthy.

When they join the Reception year, children's skills vary considerably but are broadly typical for children of their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum level (Level 3) is much higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. Pupils' overall good progress is in line with the quality of teaching. Lessons frequently include interesting activities that motivate pupils to try hard. Even so, the pace of learning sometimes slows down for particular groups of pupils or for the whole class. This occurs, for example, when pupils spend too long sitting together and listening to the teacher.

Pupils are always ready to be helpful. They willingly take on jobs such as packing away lunch boxes, tidying equipment, or making a good contribution to their community. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work and play happily together, reflecting the effectiveness of the school's efforts to promote community cohesion. The new headteacher has ensured that the school's caring ethos has been retained, while building on successful work already undertaken, for example, to develop the curriculum. She has kept the school moving forward despite the change in leadership. The arrangements to monitor the school's performance provide an accurate view of its strengths and where further improvement is needed. This information is put to good use. Steps taken to speed up progress in mathematics are already having an impact, contributing to the clear evidence that the school is well placed to continue to improve. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well during the Reception year. They make good progress from their individual starting points. By the end of the year, the skills of a greater proportion of children exceed those typical for their age in most areas of learning. Children's personal development is good, because staff ensure there is a consistent focus on this aspect of learning and provide plenty of opportunities for children to be independent and sociable. During 'Book Look' time at the start of the day, children organise their snack, chat with friends and enjoy sharing books,

including their own 'published' writing. Teaching is good. Members of the staff team share high expectations and plan a broad range of learning opportunities, balancing activities led by adults with others chosen by children. Detailed records are kept to track children's progress. Good leadership and management ensure that staff respond to this information. For example, because children's creative development appeared to be a less successful area, the provision has been enhanced to good effect by making resources such as musical instruments readily available. The high quality outdoor deck area is used well to promote learning and enjoyment. Leaders are currently exploring ways to provide freer access to space for children to run, climb and ride bikes. Children are cared for well and parents appreciate the way their children are helped to settle in quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching Level 3 in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure all pupils learn consistently well throughout each lesson.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

For a number of years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average, especially in reading. They dipped and were close to average in 2008, largely owing to the Year 2 pupils' individual starting points. The school's assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that standards are currently above average. A high proportion is working at or beyond the expected levels, particularly in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils working at the higher Level 3 in reading is much greater than in writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils who find learning especially difficult and those in the early stages of learning to speak English achieve well because the school provides them with the support they need. It works hard to ensure that pupils born later in the academic year are not unduly disadvantaged. As a result, these pupils often attain as well as comparatively older children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school is reflected in above average levels of attendance. They want to come to school. Behaviour is good. It is frequently very good during lessons, even though a very small number of pupils need significant help in order to manage their behaviour. At playtimes, pupils have a great deal of space and freedom. A few parents have observed, correctly, that a minority of pupils find it hard to remember to behave considerately in these circumstances. Their play can be boisterous but is without malicious intent and does not usually prevent others from enjoying their playtimes. From the Reception year onwards, pupils develop a good awareness of what is meant by a healthy lifestyle and they know the importance of keeping safe, for instance, when they go out of school on visits. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are involved in the local community, particularly through links with local churches, and they raise funds for charities at home and abroad. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for moving on to junior school as confident young people with positive attitudes and good basic academic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are enthusiastic and share very good working relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are confident to tackle new work and to share their ideas. Lessons regularly help pupils to make links between different aspects of learning. For example, a mathematics lesson for Year 1 pupils involved writing, geography and information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching assistants regularly make good contributions to lessons, for example, by supporting pupils who find learning particularly difficult. Teachers collect a quantity of valuable assessment information and frequently use this well to match work to pupils' needs. For instance, higher attaining pupils are usually given a harder task and are required to be more independent. Consequently, pupils nearly always make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. However, a good pace of learning is not invariably maintained throughout each lesson. On a minority of occasions, too much work is pitched at an average level and is either too hard or too easy for particular groups of pupils, so learning slows. Again, from time to time, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in discussions or practical activities and they then make satisfactory rather than fast progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are offered a range of courses that go far beyond the basic curriculum. French, multi-skills, playing ocarinas and 'show and tell' sessions are a few of the stimulating activities that enhance learning and personal development. There are good and growing opportunities for pupils to learn and apply skills during activities linked to topics such as 'the seaside'. These are well developed in literacy but ICT is incorporated less effectively. Whenever possible, pupils learn through first-hand experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils visited a museum to find out about the Victorians and later reinforced their learning through activities such as writing on slates. There is good provision for pupils' personal development including the use of a programme of social and emotional aspects of learning. Like other developments within the curriculum, this programme was introduced relatively recently and has not had time to become fully embedded. Parents and partners from other schools and the community enrich the curriculum well, for example, by leading lunchtime or after-school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and pastoral support is a particular strength. The school meets current government safeguarding requirements. It ensures that staff are trained comprehensively, for example, in child protection procedures. Staff know pupils very well and are dedicated to their welfare. As part of its planned review of the behaviour policy, the school is already giving particular attention to ways of encouraging more considerate behaviour at playtime. Well-established partnerships with a wide range of agencies and professionals enhance the school's good work in supporting pupils who need extra help with learning or behaviour or who are particularly vulnerable. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Targets for literacy and numeracy are prominent in classrooms and pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with these. Marking is always encouraging but does not consistently inform pupils about how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has already made her mark, for example, by refining some management systems. Class teachers meet regularly with the headteacher to identify any pupils who appear not to be on track to meet their targets and to decide how best to give them a boost. Plans are in hand to involve subject leaders more in monitoring the school's work, for example, by taking part in observations of teaching and learning. The school works hard and successfully to give all pupils equal opportunities and to eliminate discrimination. A number of the parents of children at the early stages of learning to speak English are very appreciative of the extra help the school provides. To extend its role in promoting community cohesion, the school is developing further its partnerships, for example, with pre-school settings. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and play an active part in evaluating the school's performance.

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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?	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?	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?	2
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

10 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of The Little Gonerby CE Infant School, Grantham, NG31 9AZ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. This letter is to tell you what we found out. Yours is a good school. We know that you agree, because you told us so!

We are not surprised that you enjoy school so much, because you have so many interesting things to do. We were amazed by all the clubs and enjoyed seeing you cheerleading and playing tennis. You help each other and your teachers and learn how to be healthy. We know you feel safe in school. This is because the staff take good care of you.

You make good progress in your work because you receive good teaching. We have asked the school to help more Year 2 children to reach Level 3 in writing and mathematics. Teachers usually give you work that is just hard enough, so you all learn well. We want the school to make sure that this happens in every lesson. We know that you will help by always trying your very best.

Your headteacher and the staff have lots of good ideas for making the school even better. We send them and each of you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Rosemary Eaton

Lead inspector