

The Sibsey Free Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120628
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327327
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Charlie Henry 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	175
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 Mark Bedford
Headteacher	Mr Phillip Coote
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Old Main Road Sibsey Boston Lincolnshire PE22 0RR
Telephone number	01205750335
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Sibsey Free is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low compared to the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to the picture found nationally. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

The school has achieved a number of awards for its work, including a British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) award for information and communication technology (ICT), Healthy School Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Football Association Charter mark, Activemark and Eco bronze award.

Onsite childcare provision at the school provides breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. The governing body does not manage this provision which is inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sibsey Free School is a good and improving school. Pupils at all stages in the school receive good education and outstanding care. It is no surprise, therefore, that the school is held in outstanding esteem by parents. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting levels, although writing and aspects of mathematics remain low at the end of this stage. Good progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They really enjoy school and parents commented on how very eager their children are to attend.

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good and sometimes outstanding. Very good planning leads to effective matching of activities to pupils' needs. Expectations are high and individual pupils' targets are challenging. Pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. Classrooms are exciting places to learn, although part of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor play area is used as a thoroughfare and this adversely affects the quality of these children's learning.

The good curriculum is well-planned and provides a wide range of exciting activities that pupils enjoy. The variety of enrichment activities is exceptional and provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and interests. The school takes excellent care of its pupils and their welfare is at the centre of all of its work. Support of pupils by their teachers and assistants is exceptionally good. They know the needs of each pupil very well. Excellent links ensure pupils have a happy introduction to school life and a smooth transition to their secondary schools.

Very enthusiastic and dedicated leadership from the headteacher, with very good support by all staff and governors, ensures the school is committed to continuous improvement. Self-assessment is accurate and effectively informs school improvement. The teamwork of all staff and governors has ensured the continued improvement of this school since the last inspection. However, improvement plans include too few measurable whole school targets concerning pupils' standards and achievements and the quality of the school's provision. The school shows good capacity to build further on its success.

Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. The contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school plays a very valuable part in the local community and increasingly with the wider community. Leaders are aware that they need to audit the school's contribution to community cohesion and implement a development plan based on an evaluation of its current practice. The school works very well with parents and with its partners in the local area.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class benefit from good teaching and learning. Staff work exceptionally well together to provide a safe environment that allows the children to explore and learn. Children's attainments on entry to the Reception class are below the typical levels for their age. The good range of stimulating learning opportunities helps them learn and develop well and they make good progress. Staff provide a good balance between adult led and free activities. By the end of the year they have achieved well, with levels that are in line with expectations in most areas. They are beginning to understand the importance of keeping fit through regular exercise and eating healthily. Levels of writing and calculation skills remain low.

Outstanding promotion of children's welfare and effective relationships with pre-school provision ensures that children settle quickly and their needs are accurately assessed. This assessment continues throughout Reception and enables staff to provide very effectively for the interests and abilities of all children. As a result, children enjoy their work; their behaviour and personal development are excellent. Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children make, through nominated staff links and the individual pupil home-books.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well-led and managed. There is an accurate understanding of the stage's strengths and areas for further improvement. Staff have begun to use data to evaluate improvements more effectively. Effective use is made of resources. However, the use of the outdoor area as a thoroughfare at breaks and lunchtimes interrupts children's construction play activities and this has a negative effect on their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the arrangements for outdoor play activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Increase the effectiveness of improvement planning by including measurable whole school targets concerning pupils' standards and achievements and the quality of the school's provision.
- Audit the school's contribution to community cohesion and implement an action plan for its development based on an evaluation of what currently takes place.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements are good and standards overall are above average by the end of Year 6. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding below the expected levels for their age. At the end of the Reception year they have made good progress and in most areas are achieving at expected levels as measured against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. School assessments identify that as pupils begin Year 1 their levels of attainment in key areas of the National Curriculum are below average levels, especially in writing and aspects of mathematics. However, by the end of Year 2 they have made good progress and are achieving at expected levels for their age. Pupils have made particularly good progress in mathematics and writing following the emphasis placed on these aspects of their learning. Good progress continues across all areas of their work throughout Key Stage 2 with pupils achieving at above expected levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills are very well-developed. Vulnerable groups, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have good support and do as well as others of the same age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is excellent. The school is making a particularly successful effort in building pupils' self-esteem; their understanding and respect for one another is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school. Attendance levels are outstanding. Pupils show exceptional willingness to learn and are keen to take part in all of the school's activities. Behaviour is outstanding.

Pupils have a very good understanding of safe practices and put these into place in lessons, around the school and when on school visits. They feel safe and know who they would talk to if they had any worries. Pupils know how to use the internet safely. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, taking opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sports and know about the 'healthy-eating' value of their lunches. They take full advantage of opportunities to carry out responsibilities in the classroom, around the school and in the wider community. The school council and the school field committee take their responsibilities very seriously. All pupils use their representatives on these groups to learn about their rights and responsibilities and contribute outstandingly well to making their school even better. All pupils gain a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding that prepares them well for their future studies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school is accurate in its assessment that the quality of lessons throughout the school is good and occasionally outstanding. Very good planning ensures that activities match the range of pupils' needs well. Teaching assistants are very effective and work very successfully in supporting teachers' work. Pace in lessons is brisk and ensures pupils stay interested in their learning. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long or there are missed opportunities for greater active involvement of pupils. Pupils try exceptionally hard. Their relationships with one another are very good and they work together outstandingly well. Paired discussions are particularly effective in supporting learning.

Expectations are high and challenge pupils to do even better. Pupils know what their learning targets are. As one pupil said, 'If you get it right all of the time, you do not learn' and 'teachers give us strategies to get it right next time.' Attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils are very enthusiastic and interested in their work.

Assessment and systems to track progress are effective. Teachers, and increasingly pupils, use this information well to establish individual targets. The school moderates pupils' assessments to ensure they are accurate and challenging. Assessment information is analysed effectively to identify any dips that need attention, for example in writing. These interventions are successful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well to ensure there is a broad and exciting range of interesting activities that pupils enjoy. It meets the needs of the mixed-age classes well and is regularly reviewed and successfully adapts to changing demands. For example, following from the school's accurate self-evaluation there has been a successful focus on improving writing skills. There is a very good emphasis on information and communication technology (ICT) and lessons include a modern foreign language. There are also very good opportunities for physical exercise and sport, as recognised through the Activemark award. Community links are strong and add a great deal to the variety of learning opportunities, including through visiting theatre groups, musicians and artists.

Enrichment activities are excellent. Interesting visits, visitors and special theme weeks are highlights of the curriculum. For example, the culture week provides good opportunities for

pupils to broaden their understanding of other cultures. There is a very wide range of lunchtime and after school events that provides a wealth of opportunities to develop skills and interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of its pupils and their welfare is at the centre of all its work. This contributes very effectively to pupils' outstanding personal development and their good achievement. Pastoral support for pupils, by their teachers and assistants, is exceptionally good. They know the needs of each pupil very well. Excellent links with nursery provision and secondary schools ensure pupils have a happy introduction to school life and a smooth transition to the next phase of learning. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements.

Guidance to help individual pupils with their learning is excellent. The school tracks their progress closely, so teachers are able to identify the next steps for learning and set challenging targets. These are translated into success criteria for pupils in every lesson, so they understand what is expected of them. The school goes to great lengths to provide resources and support for pupils who are gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so they do well in their personal development and in their academic progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Very enthusiastic and dedicated leadership from the headteacher, supported very well by the staff team and by governors, ensures that the school is committed to continuous improvement. Challenging school targets are set and demonstrate the increases made in pupils' standards and achievements. The whole staff's commitment to their pupils' personal and academic development is very evident in pupils' enjoyment in coming to school and in the outstandingly positive esteem that the school is held in by parents.

Self-assessment is accurate and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas where further improvement could be made. There is a very effective approach to improving the quality of teaching and learning, both through lesson observations and broader staff development. The school works very well with parents and with other schools and agencies. School planning is based on self-evaluation, however there are too few measurable whole school targets relating to pupils' standards and achievements and the quality of provision to allow effective monitoring of the impact of developments.

Equality of opportunity is promoted very well through the curriculum and there are detailed analyses of achievements to ensure both equality and challenge for all, including vulnerable groups. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school plays a very valuable part in the local community and increasingly with the wider community. However, the school is aware that it has not yet undertaken an audit of the full extent of its contribution and that it needs to implement a development plan based on an evaluation of what currently takes place.

Staff expertise and deployment are good; expertise has developed well to meet the needs of pupils and broader developments in teaching and learning practice. Classrooms are bright and exciting places to learn. Early Years Foundation Stage children's outdoor play is interrupted at times during the school day as the area is used as a thoroughfare.

The school's single central record demonstrates that all required staff recruitment checks take place. Records also show that appropriate staff training on safeguarding takes place.

The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and they provide a good balance of challenge and support. They are exceptionally well-informed about the school's work, both from very frequent visits during the school day and detailed information from the headteacher and other staff.

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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 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?	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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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?	1

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	1
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	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**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sibsey Free Primary School, Boston PE22 0RR

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

Sibsey Free Primary is a good school and continues to get even better. It has some outstanding features. We were very impressed with how exceptionally hard you work and with your excellent behaviour. We know how much you enjoy your school. You get on extremely well together and take very good care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your school. Your school council and field committee members ensure that your views are known. The school is a safe and happy place. We think all of the staff take exceptionally good care of you.

Children in the Reception class and at Key Stage 1 and 2 make good progress overall. Your progress in reading, speaking and listening is particularly good and you have worked hard to improve your writing.

Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to our questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school and especially like all the interesting things you do and how well you are looked after. Your headteacher, staff and governors make a strong team. They work well together and have helped improve your learning and your school. They are always trying to make improvements because they want you to have the best possible education. We have asked them to do a few things to make your school even better. Here they are.

- Improve the arrangements for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they do not have to stop what they are doing as others walk through their outdoor play area at break and lunchtimes.
- Improve school plans by using whole school targets to help measure how well you are doing and the quality of what the school provides for you.
- Carry out a check on how well the school works with the community and make a plan to make this even better.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Charlie Henry

Her Majesty's Inspector