

Caistor CofE and Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120590
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	334628
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston 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)	279
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 Jeremy Law
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Foster
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southdale Caistor Market Rasen Lincolnshire LN7 6LY

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Inspection number	334628

Telephone number
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This school is slightly bigger than most primary schools. It serves a number of villages and draws pupils from as far afield as Grimsby. Children are mostly from White British backgrounds with a small proportion in the early stages of learning English. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Around a third has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. In some year groups, this is much higher at 40%. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that found nationally. Significantly more pupils join the school at times other than the usual starting or leaving points. Whilst attainment on entry covers the full range of ability, most children enter school with skills and experiences that are below the expected levels. The school has received the nationally recognised Artsmark, International School and Healthy School Awards in recent years.

The school shares the site with a private pre-school. Provision not managed by the governing body 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

Caistor Primary is a good school which offers a good quality education to pupils. It provides good value for money. From Reception onwards, pupils' personal development and well-being and academic progress are good. This is because teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for them are all of good quality. The school is clearly enjoyed by almost all pupils and is appreciated by the large majority of parents and carers. As one parent reported, 'My children always go to school feeling happy and eager, and return feeling equally so.' Pupils generally behave well and are confident because of positive, supportive relationships with staff and purposeful, interesting teaching. Good quality personal and academic support helps most pupils to become keen and happy learners.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because good teaching in the Reception class helps children to make good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In recent years, standards have declined in Key Stage 2. There are a number of contributory reasons for this. A high number of pupils join the school at times other than the usual starting times, many of whom have learning difficulties. In addition, there was previously some inadequate teaching coupled with a delay in providing support for those falling behind. Some classes have also had a number of different teachers in a short space of time. These factors slowed rates of progress for some pupils. However, school leaders now have a clear understanding of these issues and they are successfully implementing a range of actions to address them.

Assessment and tracking systems have been recently refined so that patterns are swiftly and easily spotted. Information is used promptly to identify and support those pupils in danger of failing to achieve their potential. Teachers have a better understanding of how well their pupils are progressing and are also being held more to account for their achievement. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Teachers are using assessment outcomes to better plan to meet the needs of their pupils. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, explain clearly and provide stimulating and relevant activities that interest pupils. Teaching assistants give good support, especially when they are working with small groups of pupils. Rates of progress are accelerating, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teacher assessments and pupils' work show standards at the end of Key Stage 2 to be above average in all subjects this year.

Achievement through the school is better in reading and writing than in mathematics. There are weaknesses in mental arithmetic and using and applying mathematical skills in other subjects. In addition, some higher attaining pupils do not achieve their full potential because teachers do not always challenge or extend them sufficiently. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because their needs are identified quickly and effective support is put in place.

The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness. Leaders have a realistic view of strengths and weaknesses through checks on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Although subject leaders have undertaken some monitoring and evaluation of their subject, they have not yet had the opportunity to check on how well pupils are learning in the classroom. There is some inconsistency in teachers' expectations and marking. In addition, targets are not consistently reinforced in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. Good management has effectively steered the school through recent difficult times. Good leadership has successfully raised standards and this shows that the school's capacity to improve is good. There is an

enthusiasm and capability to drive the school forward. Governors work well with the school and provide good support for its work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well as a result of good provision and effective teaching. Children of all levels of prior attainment make good progress in developing key skills in all six areas of learning for their age. A key factor in this is because the teacher and classroom assistant have high expectations of them. Activities are planned well for each week and a good range of resources are made available to children. These activities are planned taking careful consideration of information from assessment. Staff carefully observe and record what children achieve. This information is used well to plan the next steps for each child. Children's enjoyment is visible when they take part in the many interesting and exciting activities provided. They behave well. They successfully learn to be independent due to the fact that there are some activities which are adult led and some for them to choose themselves. The children learn effectively about how to eat healthily and to stay safe. The provision to ensure children's welfare is good. They are well cared for whether they are in the classrooms or in the outside area. Children are kept safe due to the effective implementation of the good policies. They handle equipment safely because staff guide them diligently. Standards at the end of Reception vary across the six areas. They are broadly in line with those expected overall, especially in early calculation skills. The progress children make in their personal development is particularly good. Children's dispositions and attitudes to school are extremely positive, because of the emphasis placed on this aspect of their development. However, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is aware that daily opportunities for strenuous physical activities and developing upper body strength are limited by the small outdoor space and resources currently available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve rates of progress in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, by addressing weakness in mathematical skills and understanding and challenging and expecting more of some pupils, particularly the higher attainers.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' expectations and marking across the school and ensure that targets are used effectively in subjects other than literacy and mathematics.
- Enable subject leaders to check on teaching to know how well pupils are learning and what is needed to improve provision further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's strategies to raise attainment are having a positive impact, as shown in the recent improvements. This is particularly evident in the improvement in standards and achievement seen in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. However, more work remains to be done to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although progress has accelerated in mathematics in Year 6, the legacy of previous inadequate teaching means that they have only made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Weaknesses in pupils' mental agility and their inability to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects hamper their progress. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve standards that are above average by the end of Year

2. Girls achieve significantly better than boys in reading and writing at the higher levels. In Key Stage 2, their progress is good overall. Although standards dipped in 2008, the current Year 6 are working at least at the expected levels and the school's data indicate they should reach above national standards by the end of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and well mannered, eager to share their enthusiasm for school life. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils are pleased with the level of care they receive from staff and from each other, with the following comment typical of many expressed: 'It's great here - no-one gets left out.' Behaviour is good. Pupils say that bullying has sometimes occurred, but the overwhelming majority are happy with the way any incidents are resolved. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils' strong spiritual awareness is seen in their response to opportunities for reflection in assemblies. Their cultural development is greatly enhanced by the opportunity to establish friendships with pupils at a more culturally diverse school in Scunthorpe. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy. They offer clear reasons for the healthy diet and exercise choices they make. Pupils are proud of the work of the very active School Council which organises fund-raising events to subsidise school trips. Year 6 prefects and playground buddies also make an important contribution to the school community by helping to ensure that younger pupils enjoy happy playtimes. The good contribution made to the wider community is seen in the many city and county events involving pupils from the school. Pupils work well independently and in partnership with others. Their positive attitudes to work result in good achievement, which shows they are well prepared for future success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching ensures that pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make overall good progress from their individual starting points. Strengths of teaching include good behaviour management and working relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants are skilled and make a positive contribution to lessons and the work of groups. Teachers pay particular attention in their planning to making lessons interesting, by basing them, where possible on practical and exciting activities. They also make strong links between subjects, such as using information and communication technology in mathematics lessons. Because of this, these lessons grip pupils' imagination and interest and their levels of concentration and enjoyment are high. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers talk for too long and sometimes require potentially higher attaining pupils to perform mundane tasks before attempting more challenging work. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school. There are variations in expectation, particularly of presentation, in the quality of teachers' written examples and in the use of reference to pupils' literacy and numeracy targets in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum ensures that all pupils receive a broad range of activities which are enjoyable and support learning well. However, some subjects such as history and geography are not taught

in sufficient depth in some classes. The provision for physical education and music in particular are very good. Many pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn to play musical instrument such as the cello and violin and to perform regularly in concerts. For example, the school choir has performed extensively, including at Lincoln Cathedral and at the Lincolnshire Show. The curriculum is enriched both by staff and visitors who share their expertise across a range of extra-curricular activities where take-up is high. Good links between subjects and activities such as the 'Creative Partnership' work capitalise on pupils' interests, making learning relevant and meaningful. Visits and visitors are used well to supplement the curriculum. Pupils use the local community well to enhance their learning. Theme weeks such as the recent environmental week take place in all year groups, enabling pupils to learn about aspects of life, traditions and cultures of countries from across the world. Pupils use information and communication technology resources confidently, which effectively supports their learning across the curriculum. The use of homework to support the curriculum is variable. In some classes, it is set irregularly and pupils' responses are not always made full use of in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Systems to ensure pupils' care and welfare are good. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils fully meet current requirements. There is good support for pupils who require additional help with their work and for those who find learning more difficult. Good use is made of strong links with other agencies, which benefit these pupils' learning effectively. The school takes effective steps to help children settle into Reception and to help older pupils transfer to their next stage of education. Routines are well established and known to all. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They say they are confident they know what to do if they have a problem. Some take advantage of the secure 'worry box' if they have a concern that they want to bring to the attention of an adult. All pupils have individual targets to guide them in their learning in literacy and numeracy. However, while these targets are very regularly referred to in some classes and pupils are involved in a regular review, both of their own work and that of others, this is not a consistent practice across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The interim headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. She is well supported by the School Manager and other senior leaders. Staff and governors have an accurate view of how well the school is performing. Through the introduction of improved tracking procedures, senior leaders are analysing carefully pupils' performance and identifying where there is potential underachievement. Leaders are focusing precisely on the areas that need improving and have introduced effective strategies to make it happen. Teachers are held accountable for the progress their pupils make which is leading to improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders know that a continuing focus on provision in mathematics is required to further accelerate pupils' progress and boost their achievement. They also know that there are some inconsistencies in marking and teachers' use of targets.

Subject leaders are increasing their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although they are involved in reviewing the school's work and identifying areas for improvement, they have not yet had the opportunity to check how well pupils are learning and what is needed for them to improve. The number of staffing changes causes some parents concern. However,

new staff members have been well integrated into school and are increasingly effective. Governors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to the school. They receive a good range of information and their support in school is valued. The school's policy to promote community cohesion is implemented effectively. Pupils play a full and active part in the community and have a good understanding of other communities locally, nationally and internationally. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school.

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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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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**

25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caistor CofE and Methodist Primary School, Caistor, LN7 6LY

Thank you for welcoming us so well to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, watching you learn and looking at your work. We thought you would like to hear what we liked about your school and how it could get even better.

What we liked about your school.

- You are friendly and confident, and happy to talk about what you were doing
- You behave well in lessons and enjoy what you do, especially when you are working together or have practical activities to do
- You have some good ideas about how the school can improve
- Your interim headteacher and other grown-ups working in the school look after you and make sure that everyone behaves well and is happy. This makes sure that you can get on in lessons
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard at their teaching and try to get it right for each one of you
- Most of your parents and carers really like the school and feel you learn well.

What we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Your teachers should find ways to help you get even better at maths. You can help by working as hard in maths as you do with your reading
- Your teachers need to make sure marking helps you to improve your work and link your literacy and numeracy targets to other subjects
- Your teachers should check what is happening more in other classes and share all the good things they find so that they can learn from each other and get even better.

I feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn in the future. Keep on working hard and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector