

Gunthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110730
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	337558
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Moore
Headteacher	Kay Corley
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, data on pupils' progress, pupils' books, displays around the school and the 39 returned parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the pupils' attainment and progress, especially in writing, problem solving and investigative science
- whether teaching is good enough to bring standards up to the national average
- the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Gunthorpe is a larger than average primary school serving families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and there is increasing pupil mobility (pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year). Over the past two years, the school has admitted an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils in both these groups is now above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. There have been many staff changes in the past two years, including a new headteacher in September 2008 and new deputy headteacher in September 2009. Both teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage are new to the school and recently qualified. The school holds an award for promoting healthy living.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Gunthorpe provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school's welcoming atmosphere reflects the sense of shared purpose that is currently driving the work of the school. This renewal of ambition was necessary as standards had declined significantly since the last inspection and there had been many staff changes over a short period of time. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science decreased from 2007 to 2009, teaching was not good enough and pupils were making insufficient progress. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have arrested this decline and put the school on a much firmer footing. They have established a sharp focus on pupils' progress and set higher expectations for teachers to accelerate pupils' learning.

Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to attain higher standards than in 2009 but the indications are that standards are likely to still be below the national average.

Nevertheless, this represents satisfactory progress for these pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is improving, but pupils' progress is not yet rapid and consistent enough to enable all pupils to achieve well. More-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and there are too few opportunities for all pupils to develop initiative and learn independently. The curriculum offers an adequate range of activities within the school and some extended opportunities through links with other local schools. Pupils make enjoyable and secure gains in some lessons which link subjects together in interesting ways, enabling them to apply a variety of relevant skills. In other lessons however, learning is ineffective because the level of skills expected do not match the pupils' capabilities.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively to complete the tasks set for them in lessons, but the tasks are not consistently matched to their specific individual needs. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are warmly welcomed and integrate well, but staff lack the expertise to respond effectively to pupils' particular needs. The learning mentor provides good, and much appreciated, pastoral support for pupils with a range of personal and health needs. Pupils feel safe in school and are well-informed about how to lead healthy lives.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress, but their attainment is still well below average on entry to Year 1. Play-based activities are provided, but there is an imbalance between child-initiated and teacher-led learning. There are also insufficient attractive resources to maximise learning indoor and out.

The governors now work effectively with the headteacher following a period in which

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they had too little information about the school to properly fulfil their roles. They are beginning to play their part in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and have begun a systematic review of policies. Together with the recent upturn in standards and quality of teaching, this strong partnership contributes to a sound capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science by:
 - increasing the level of challenge for more-able pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop and apply skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that all teachers take responsibility for accelerating pupils' progress in their classes.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by:
 - increasing the proportion of lessons that accelerate pupils' learning to at least 80%
 - matching the support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more closely to their individual needs
 - providing training for staff in how best to support pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - involving staff more widely in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - giving children more opportunities to make their own choices and pursue their own interests
 - enhancing the quality of support for children as they are learning independently
 - ensuring that resources to support activities both inside and outdoors are equally stimulating.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspection before their next Section 5 Inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards are beginning to rise following the recent period of decline. Current Year 4 pupils, for example, have made good gains in attainment since Year 2. Attainment in writing, mathematics and science is still too low throughout the school, but pupils are now acquiring better skills through good collaboration in some lessons. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 delegated tasks within a group, independent of the teacher, in order to tackle a mathematical problem more effectively. Minority ethnic pupils, those

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with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to other pupils. In some lessons, more-able pupils too often spend time on tasks that they find easy and therefore do not make enough progress.

Progress and attainment in subjects across the curriculum is patchy because lessons are not consistently planned to develop skills at the appropriate level. Some older pupils do not respond well when given responsibility to work independently, but most do. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 to 6 responded very maturely to the challenge of working independently. They willingly contribute ideas and listen to suggestions put forward by others. A high level of enjoyment is evident in lessons in which this happens. Most pupils say they feel safe and that behaviour round the school is usually good, though a small minority say it is not. The pupils have an awareness of the need to keep healthy and express a desire to do so. They are confident socially and make a good contribution to school life through the school council and other responsibilities. Their knowledge of the wider community, particularly their appreciation of cultural diversity, even within their own home-town, is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving but is still not consistently good enough to bring pupils' attainment up to expected levels by the end of Year 6. In the good lessons, effective and enjoyable learning was secured through stimulating activities that encouraged the pupils to collaborate and use their own ideas. A hum of purposeful conversation characterises these lessons, with the teacher playing a watchful and supportive role and interacting with pupils to support and extend their thinking rather than direct them. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 collaborated well and deployed a range of communication, thinking and writing skills to produce posters promoting cycling as a benefit to their health and the environment. The less effective lessons focus too much on the accomplishment of rather mundane activities with too much teacher input to the whole class. Extension tasks are too often planned as an added extra rather than an essential tool for learning. More-able pupils are particularly affected by this because they are included in groups when teaching is directed at lower attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from staff to complete classroom tasks but there is a lack of clarity about how their specific needs are met on a daily basis. Pupils at the early stages of learning English are paired in lessons with pupils who speak the same home language where possible. This aids their learning and personal development but staff are not sufficiently aware of the full range of methods and resources available to support these pupils.

The learning mentor works closely with families and external agencies to help pupils with a range of problems, with a positive impact on behaviour, progress and personal development. One parent commented: 'The school has been great in helping us to help our daughter so she has the best chance of an education.'

Links with other schools in the locality provide extra activities, especially physical education and sports sessions, which the pupils enjoy. The religious education syllabus teaches the pupils about a range of religions, but not enough is done through the curriculum to prepare pupils for life in a wider multicultural society.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have made significant improvements to the school in a short time. They have established a sense of shared responsibility among

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pupils, staff and governors. The governors, for example, now have a much clearer idea of how well the school is doing and are motivated to play their part in school evaluation and improvement. Some parents and carers expressed appreciation of the renewed sense of direction and ambition for their children. The teachers are responding positively to the higher expectations. They show a willingness to extend their roles beyond the classroom but many are recently qualified and therefore lack management experience. Those with responsibility posts are developing monitoring expertise but currently most of the work of school evaluation is done by the two senior leaders. Data are now being used effectively to track pupils' progress each term and teachers are beginning to take responsibility for achievement in their classes.

The school involves parents and carers satisfactorily in some aspects of its work. For example, the parents' council designed and produced the new school brochure. Safeguarding procedures are robust and policies are in place to guide all aspects of the school's work, including equal opportunities. The process of systematic review has now started. The school shares a policy on community cohesion with the local cluster of schools but this has not yet been adapted to set specific aims for the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class provides a welcoming atmosphere. The children enjoy coming to school and get on well with each other and the staff. The attainment of children entering reception has declined in recent years and is well below average, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. They make satisfactory progress overall

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but their attainment remains particularly low in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. By the time they leave reception, they still have ground to make up in most of the areas of learning before they are ready to begin the National Curriculum. The teachers are both relatively new to the profession and the setting is managed by the headteacher. This presents some difficulty in monitoring and evaluating outcomes and provision. For example, staff are relatively inexperienced in ensuring a correct balance between children-initiated and teacher-led learning and engaging effectively with the children as they play. Some of the direct teaching has had a positive impact on specific outcomes. For example, regular practice in linking sounds and letters has improved the children's performance in this aspect of language and literacy. The equipment and materials provided allow for a range of activities but are insufficient in range and quality to facilitate the best possible learning for the children, indoors and out.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The few parents and carers who returned questionnaires are supportive of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. They agree with the inspectors that the school keeps the children safe and encourages them to be healthy. They think that teaching is good and are kept well informed about their children's progress. Some expressed appreciation for what the new headteacher had done to improve the school. A very few parents and carers were concerned that their children were not getting the help they needed to make good progress in preparation for secondary school. The inspection team judged that the school was doing well overall in these areas. The school carried out its own survey recently which had a larger response and equally positive results.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gunthorpe Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	72	10	26	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	54	17	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	44	21	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	31	21	54	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	41	19	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	26	20	51	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	46	20	51	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	28	19	49	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	28	20	51	2	5	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	41	18	46	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	33	16	41	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	44	14	36	1	3	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	49	21	49	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gunthorpe Primary School, Peterborough, PE4 7YP

My colleagues and I all enjoyed our two days in your school which is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are the things we thought were good:

- you are lively and interesting to talk to and get on well with each other
- you are well-mannered and obedient most of the time
- the school keeps you safe and you are keen to live healthy lives
- you work hard when the lessons are interesting
- all the staff work together well as a team
- all the children are treated equally.

These are the main things we thought needed to be better:

- you should do more problem-solving and investigating
- more lessons should make all of you work hard
- teachers should make sure you make good progress every term
- teachers should find even better ways of helping those of you with special educational needs and those of you who are just learning English
- the children in Reception should have more and better equipment to play with so that they learn as much as they can indoors and out.

Thank you for making us so welcome. We hope you continue to enjoy school and do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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