

North Thoresby Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120470 |
| Local Authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 339702 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth McFarlane |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 40 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Keith Butters |
| Headteacher | Irene Casey-Evans |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 July 2007 |
| School address | High street North Thoresby Grimsby |
| Telephone number | 01472 840 295 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Eleven lessons or part lessons were observed and all the teachers present were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with staff, governors and with personnel representing outside agencies supporting the school, including the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at planning, minutes of meetings, other documentation including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' work and progress records, responses to a pupil survey and 13 parental questionnaires

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how well the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is implemented in the mixed-age setting
- how well the wide age range is catered for in lessons
- how well the more able are catered for
- how well leadership arrangements drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is a very small rural school in which pupils are taught in two full time classes. The Early Years Foundation Stages comprises a small number of Reception-age children who are taught in a class with Years 1 and 2. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and all pupils speak English as their main language at home. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Their difficulties are mostly moderate learning difficulties (MLD), or behavioural, social or emotional difficulties. Some have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). A breakfast club is run by the governing body. At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher and the only other full time teacher were on long term sick leave. For several months the school has been led by acting leaders: the acting executive headteacher is also the substantive headteacher of a nearby school that is in a formal collaboration (formerly known as a soft federation) with this one. A seconded deputy headteacher is at the school in a full time capacity.

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

North Thoresby Primary is a satisfactory school. Since the previous inspection, numerous staff changes and long-term staff absences have held back efforts to bring about sustained improvement. However, the acting leadership has made an effective start. There are already signs that pupils' attainment is rising through improved timetabling and robust checks on learning. Higher expectations are providing a positive platform upon which to accelerate progress and raise attainment. Parents are confident that their children are safe and happy and their children confirm that they enjoy school and feel safe there.

Learning gets off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here, new initiatives have begun to take root but the teaching of phonics (linking sounds with letters) is not regular enough and children are not given sufficient opportunities to practise drawing patterns in preparation for writing. Because of this, some find it hard to form their letters correctly.

Achievement is satisfactory and reflects the teaching which leads to broadly average attainment by Year 6. Small and varied cohorts make big differences but, each year, pupils make satisfactory progress from their varied starting points. Attainment in mathematics is lower than in English because pupils' progress is slower in that subject. There are several reasons for this. Until recently, the timetable was organised with large blocks of numeracy and literacy so that these subjects were not spread through the week. This limited progress through lack of continuity and wavering interest, felt particularly in mathematics. Progress in mathematics is also held back by limited investigation work and by a lack of opportunity in other subjects for applying mathematical skills. In a number of subjects, often the same task is provided for a range of year groups and abilities, limiting challenge for the more able. Information about progress is gathered robustly by the acting leadership but, in lessons, individual targets are not set consistently or regularly enough to help pupils understand what they need to do to reach the next level. Teachers' written feedback to pupils does not often indicate how pupils might improve.

Responsibility for subjects is not shared, so staff have little involvement in evaluating the quality of learning across the school in a particular subject. This limits their understanding of how best to support learning. Although acting leaders have evaluated school performance accurately, recognising both its strengths and areas needing attention, capacity to improve further is satisfactory, rather than good. This is because the unsettled nature of staffing prevents firm plans from being put into action and slows the work of governors in reviewing school and pupil performance. Monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision is not yet fully developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that daily sessions linking sounds to letters are included in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision on a systematic programme, and that plenty of pre-writing activities are included when children are ready to write.
 - Accelerate pupils' progress, especially but not only in mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching so that at least 80% of lesson observations are good or better by July 2011, by:
 - setting subject specific targets that are shared with pupils and regularly reviewed
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in numeracy lessons and across subjects, including more investigative work to develop pupils' thinking skills
 - pitching tasks precisely to ability and that provide sufficient challenge, especially for the more able
 - ensuring written feedback in pupils' books explains how pupils can improve.
 - Strengthen the school's capacity to sustain improvement by:
 - securing the leadership and staffing of the school
 - extending governors' skills in reviewing information on pupils' performance and monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
 - enabling all staff to take an active role in monitoring, evaluating and leading improvements.
 - About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils learn together in a small and friendly school community. They make broadly satisfactory progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with MLD and ASD. Those with behavioural, social or emotional difficulties make equivalent progress to their peers because they are given appropriate support. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at all ages is therefore broadly in line with expectation overall, although progress in mathematics is slower. Pupils say they enjoy school and show this by their generally willingness to cooperate with each other, with their teachers and other adults. For instance, in the Key Stage 1 class, in a lesson combining science, literacy and numeracy, pupils work together well in identifying the characteristics of mini-beasts, thinking about the best way to sort them and log their results. In the Key Stage 2 class, pupils spent a happy afternoon designing a new planet, some combining their information and communication technology (ICT) skills with imaginative design and descriptive language. Lessons like

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these promote learning because pupils' interest is captured and retained in tasks that provide appropriate and open-ended challenge.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their behaviour, is satisfactory. They enjoy taking on responsibilities that contribute to the decision making in the school. For instance, school councillors receive feedback from pupil questionnaire responses, and prioritise areas for improvement. Pupils' engagement in their community, currently satisfactory, is improving. They participate enthusiastically in events alongside the school to which they are formally federated. Their satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles shows in their participation in the sporting activities on offer. Their personal skills, along with satisfactory progress in basic skills, including literacy, numeracy and ICT, prepare them satisfactorily for their future. In recent times, attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

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 | 3 |
| 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 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Good relationships and sensitive encouragement underpin pupils' satisfactory progress, whatever their ability. This is bolstered by appropriate

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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attention to their care and welfare. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils are confident that an adult will be on hand to offer support when needed. Their attendance has improved through the school's effective work in partnership with parents and the local authority. New starters receive suitable support so that they can quickly play a full part in school life. A breakfast club provides a satisfactory start to the school day for those pupils who participate.

Good classroom organisation is a feature of most lessons. The challenges of teaching in a mixed-age setting are managed satisfactorily overall, but learning is held back by expectations that are not often high enough. The most usual lesson format is for the same task to be provided for all abilities in up to a four year age range, with extension tasks sometimes provided. This does not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able or encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills effectively. For instance, the use of research materials such as books and the internet to support learning is not a regular feature of lessons at any level. Teachers' use of assessment is variable.

The curriculum overall is under review. It currently provides all required subjects including ICT and a good range of personal, social and health initiatives. Pupils and parents have welcomed the more even spread of literacy and numeracy through the week and the inclusion of some joint activities which enrich pupils' learning through the partnership with their formally-linked school.

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?

Despite challenges faced recently, the temporary leadership is satisfactory and has focused successfully on raising attainment and securing a new pride in the school environment. The acting executive headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness: she knows its strengths and has pinpointed necessary improvements that focus clearly on raising standards and accelerating progress. This has yet to manifest itself in accelerating pupils' progress to a consistently good rate because teachers do not use all the information available to set accurate individual targets or react quickly enough to any variations in individual achievement.

The governing body provides satisfactory support. Governors are now focusing on developing their skills. Partnerships and engagement with parents are satisfactory. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It places a successful emphasis on making sure that all pupils have opportunities to participate in everything that is on

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offer. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were satisfactory. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Stronger links are forged within the locality than further afield.

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

By the start of Year 1, most children have made satisfactory progress from their varied starting points and most reach the expected Early Learning Goals. Plenty of opportunities for children to talk about their learning help to boost their language skills but the building blocks for reading and writing, such as linking sounds and letters and practice in drawing the main patterns of letters are not given enough emphasis. Children's personal development is satisfactory supported by caring relationships between adults and children that ensure they are happy and feel safe. The suitable and balanced range of activities from which children can choose, in free-flow arrangements inside and outside, fosters their sense of exploration and investigation. As a result they become eager young learners who find learning and playing together enjoyable, whether in adult-led activities or ones they have chosen themselves. Children showed respect and consideration when working together, using sponges to paint a realistic sky, and going outside to check that the real thing looked just like their picture. This type of activity helps them to develop a good understanding of the world around them.

The new temporary leadership has made a satisfactory start in promoting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Daily activities take account of children's varying needs. The challenge of providing for children in a setting that includes older pupils is suitably managed and planning clearly takes account of the

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differing needs of the under-fives. One benefit is that when working on joint initiatives, the under-fives can emulate their older classmates' work and see, for instance, just how realistic their collage crocodiles and butterflies can look.

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

Some parents and carers who returned questionnaires requested more detailed discussion with the inspector. All were contacted and their views taken. Most responses were supportive of most aspects of the school's work. All agree that their children are happy, are kept safe, and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. All written responses indicated parents and carers believe the teaching is good. However, a small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about a perceived lack of progress and a concern that the school is not meeting their children's needs. A majority commented that they are in strong support of the current acting temporary leadership, but are concerned at the necessary temporary arrangements. The inspector investigated concerns, as noted elsewhere in this report. All aspects were judged satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Thoresby 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 inspector received 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 5 | 38 | 8 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 5 | 38 | 8 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 5 | 38 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 15 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 4 | 31 | 5 | 38 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 5 | 38 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 4 | 31 | 8 | 62 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 6 | 46 | 7 | 54 | 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) | 4 | 31 | 3 | 23 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 4 | 31 | 6 | 46 | 3 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 2 | 15 | 10 | 77 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 4 | 31 | 5 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 23 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 4 | 31 | 5 | 38 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 5 | 38 | 5 | 38 | 3 | 23 | 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

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



12 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Thoresby Primary School, Grimsby, DN36 5PL

Thank you so much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed being part of your school community and finding out about your views. I am writing to let you know what I thought.

You told me that you feel safe in school and that you are confident that all the adults care for and support you, especially if you are having difficulties or are worried.

You go to a satisfactory school. You make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are about the same as other children of your age achieve. In mathematics your progress is a bit slower. I have asked the school to think up more ways to help you practise your mathematics skills in other subjects, and to give you more opportunities to investigate mathematical problems.

So that your school becomes even better, I have asked that some improvements be made. I have asked the governors to check up what is happening in school a bit more regularly and to do all they can to make sure staff don't keep on changing, because you and your parents and carers told me just how unsettling that has been.

I have asked that your teachers get to know as much as they can about how you are doing overall, and make sure they plan activities that are just right for you and make you think a bit harder. I have asked that you are set targets that are just right for you, and that teachers' marking explains in more detail what you should do to improve further. This will help you make faster progress. For the little ones, I have asked that they are given lots of practice, when they are ready, in how to write, and how letters sound.

You can help your school by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy or too hard and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should make sure that you always try your best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead inspector

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