

The Utterby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120484
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339706
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Dixon
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Hall
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The majority of time was spent observing lessons and all three teachers were observed over seven lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and members of staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at data about the school's performance, the school improvement plan, key policies and procedures and the governing body minutes. The inspector analysed staff and pupil questionnaires and 21 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact of mixed age classes on the level of challenge in learning and the subsequent achievement of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1
- how effectively the school is preparing pupils for the cultural diversity of the world in which we live
- the extent to which the school's assessment practices and procedures are driving pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in enabling children to get off to a rapid start to their learning.

Information about the school

This very small school is housed in a Victorian building with a modern extension. It is located in an isolated area away from the village and surrounding areas that it serves. All pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion entitled to free school meals are above average and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. They have mainly general learning difficulties. Mobility of pupils is above average. The school works in partnership with a local primary school to which it is federated and with four neighbouring secondary schools. It has achieved the Activemark Award for three consecutive years. It has been awarded the Foundation level of the International Schools Award and at the start of the year attained the Financial Management Standards in Schools Award. The governing body runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club. There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection, including a new headteacher who took up her post in September 2007.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides an effective education for all of its pupils. Improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and in the academic guidance for pupils, all of which are good, have resulted in pupils' good progress through the school. The headteacher leads the school extremely well. Her rigorous auditing of the school on her arrival and the subsequent very focused monitoring of initiatives to drive up standards are the primary factor in the school's drive forwards and in its good capacity for further improvement. The school's capacity is backed up by reorganisation of management roles to match its needs and by a governing body that has a quickly developing understanding of the school's performance. While attainment in science is in line with the national average and improving by the end of Year 6, tracking systems right through the school are not yet promoting quicker progress through other year groups.

The school is successful in minimising potential barriers to its development, such as the school's small size and its physical isolation. For example, profitable partnerships with other schools have broadened learning opportunities, alongside the school's more creative planning of the curriculum and meaningful links between subjects through themes. All are enabling pupils to develop a satisfactory and improving understanding of the cultural diversity of the world, particularly internationally, with closer local links being sought.

Every pupil is known personally by the staff. Together with clear support systems, it ensures their social and emotional needs are met well from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. Parents show strong support for the school although this has not yet extended to enough involvement in their children's learning. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities are prized and their breadth promotes pupils' good personal development. This is particularly so in the school council which is a genuine partner in some decisions about learning. Also, members' involvement in play arrangements has reinforced pupils' good understanding of being safe and keeping safe.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, making sound progress. Although there are some emerging strengths in teaching and leadership and management, resources are not regularly presented imaginatively enough to inspire children. In the small groups, tasks are not refined sufficiently carefully to match more closely children's individual learning needs and thus accelerate their progress. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils are served well by the mixed age groups so that they make good progress and standards are on track to rise at the end of both key stages in 2010. This is also the case with pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult, where resources are used carefully to meet individual needs. This is because tasks are carefully planned in most lessons although tasks for more able pupils do not always go further

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than upping the level of difficulty of the same task. Similarly while writing standards are improving, the new strategies are not fully embedded. Assessment of pupils' learning, an issue at the last inspection, has become far more of a focus and marking now usually gives pupils very clear guidance on the next steps in learning. Even the youngest children show confidence in evaluating their own work because it is integral to learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by Summer 2011 through:
 - focusing planning and learning outcomes specifically on the needs of the children and towards the early learning goals
 - using resources more creatively to stimulate children's learning indoors and outdoors.
- Raise standards further in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially in writing by:
 - embedding writing initiatives through the school
 - developing the tracking of science progress through the school
 - ensuring that tasks, including for the more able pupils, empower them to test their skills through, for example, problem solving.
- Build up learning links between home and school by providing regular opportunities for parents to become partners in their children's learning and progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average. There is some variability from year to year in the very small year groups, which can be aggravated by the well above average mobility of pupils. Nevertheless progress is good through the school, showing a three year improving trend. It includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported very effectively by teaching assistants and who make particularly good progress. Progress in writing is accelerating through the school. Although having some way to go, it is helped by meaningful opportunities for pupils to add to their skills through links across subjects. Progress in science is not quite as good as in English or mathematics because new systems for tracking progress have yet to impact fully on learning. Nevertheless, pupils made good progress in an engaging science lesson where pupils watched in awe as their investigations came to a conclusion. The effectiveness of the lesson was extended by the teacher's challenging questioning, his emphasis on why the reaction had taken place and high expectations in recording the processes.

Pupils speak positively of school, enjoying planned opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. They behave well, encouraged by the positions of responsibility they can apply for and which help them to develop sound workplace skills. This aspect is strengthened by regular and engaging enterprise activities, including a mathematics challenge for pupils from Year 1 onwards. The school council has meaningful involvement in school development decisions such as helping to ensure that

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pupils stay safe and in devising a homework policy. Members ensure that all pupils have the chance to give their opinions. Pupils take good advantage of the school's provision for learning about and adopting healthy lifestyles, showing keenness to keep fit. Their knowledge of the importance of eating healthily is satisfactory. Attendance is overall broadly average, with the school working hard to improve that of a minority of pupils. The school's carefully thought out provision and its ethos results in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Caring and respect for others is the foundation of its work and results in a close knit school where pupils enthusiastically help those less well-off than themselves.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Very positive relationships between staff and pupils promote a happy, positive environment for learning. The vast majority of lessons observed during the inspection were effective, resulting in pupils' good progress. Common strengths are a brisk pace to learning, lots of pupil involvement and tasks which generally match well the levels at which pupils work. Sometimes the purpose of learning is expressed in vocabulary which

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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is not easily understood by pupils and tasks for the more able could be more carefully thought out to test new skills. Assessment procedures have been a focus since the last inspection and pupils know their targets and work towards them. Marking encourages progress because it very regularly states achievements and often tells pupils how to improve their work. Exemplary practice was seen in a literacy lesson where marking informed planning and resulted in specific targets for the next task. Pupils assess their own work quite confidently, as seen at the end of a Year 1 and Year 2 lesson, when pupils enthusiastically explained to the teacher what they had learnt and what they weren't sure about. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is due to a combination of good teaching and focused support on individual needs. The quality of questioning is variable although in some lessons it accelerates pupils' progress through its very specific focus.

The carefully planned curriculum ensures that pupils get a good coverage of subjects in the mixed-age classes. Literacy and numeracy are a focus in all lessons although learning is increasingly practical and skills-based, adding to pupils' enjoyment. Themes are a regular feature, enable more depth and breadth to learning and encourage pupils' cultural development. An example of this is the themed week which looked at communities beyond the school and a China week. Partnership work with a local primary school strengthens the range of activities while links with secondary schools enable specialist teaching in physical education and design technology. Simultaneously, pupils' personal development is promoted well. The combination of visits, visitors and after-school activities result in good enhancement of pupils' learning and their growing enthusiasm for learning and discovering new talents.

Relationships between home and school are nurtured from when children first start school. The school cares for pupils very well on a daily basis and has good systems in place to help ensure their safety and well-being. Consequently, for example, a detailed child protection policy is in place, backed up by appropriately trained staff, and careful attention is given to all other health and safety procedures. All pupils are known as individuals. Sensitive and relevant support, together with good communication between staff, has resulted in individual pupils being able to overcome particular difficulties and make strides in their personal development and learning. Pupils trust the staff and are confident to ask for help with any problems. The school's wide links with outside agencies result in specialist help being available for pupils with specific issues. Transition arrangements are in place but the school has plans to put in more practical activities to prepare pupils more thoroughly for the greater personal demands of secondary school. The breakfast and after-school club provide social and learning opportunities, which pupils benefit from.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has made significant changes to the school since her appointment, with her very clear focus on raising attainment culminating in pupils' good progress through the school in 2009. Rigorous monitoring of the school's performance and well planned strategies to move the school forward have paid dividends. Further improvement in progress is predicted for this year. The headteacher has empowered staff by giving them responsibilities which have ensured that ambition for the school is embedded. Effective partnerships with a variety of organisations and with other schools have strengthened the impact of the curriculum on learning and added to the quality of care, guidance and support. The headteacher is keen to extend parents' support for the school to their involvement in their children's learning. However, parents do show great support for the school's success in educating their children in the broadest sense and for keeping them safe. Safeguarding is overseen conscientiously by the governors and incorporates good quality reviewing. Overall governors, several of whom are new, are building up their knowledge and understanding of the school well, under the confident leadership of the chair, in order to be able to challenge its performance thoroughly. Equality of opportunity is extending, through partnership work, to pupils with specific gifts and talents who also achieve well. Despite the cultural similarity of the area, the school has shown imagination in promoting community cohesion, particularly internationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points which vary, but which are overall in line with the levels of knowledge and skills found nationally, children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's personal, social and emotional development accelerates through the stage, helped by their grouping with Key Stage 1 pupils. The children greatly enjoy the support and friendship of the older children and model their caring, sharing and safe behaviour in the classroom, outdoors and in the after-school club. The rota for jobs is enthusiastically shared. Staff make good use of the environment, indoors and outdoors, providing a sound range of activities. Resources are satisfactory but are not often enough used imaginatively enough in promoting greater motivation during free play and directed learning. Questioning is also not focused carefully enough on the learning outcomes. Leadership and management is satisfactory, with emerging strengths in planning and teaching. There is good practice in recording children's achievements and in helping them to understand what we need to do to stay healthy. By the end of the stage, standards are broadly in line, although above in personal, social and emotional development.

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

A majority of parents returned the questionnaire. The vast majority of these were overwhelmingly supportive of what one parent described as 'This very friendly small school where every child matters.' One parent singled out the school's commitment to preparing their children for life as an adult. That parent wrote, 'I have never known a school encourage and teach the children so much about cultures and children at school in other countries.' The major views expressed related to the friendliness of the school, its role as an extended family and the effective management. Three parents felt that some work was either repeated or that there was not always enough challenge. This was not the case during the inspection but the headteacher is monitoring the situation.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Utterby 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 54 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	71	5	24	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	67	6	29	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	57	9	43	3	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	57	6	29	0	0	1	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	57	6	29	2	10	2	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	67	6	29	1	5	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)	10	48	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	52	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	67	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	63	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	67	5	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	62	7	33	0	0	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.



Wednesday 3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Utterby Primary School, Lincolnshire, LN11 0TN

I am writing to tell you the judgements that I made about your school when I visited it recently. I had such an enjoyable time and I thank you for making me so welcome and for telling me your views about school. During my visit all of you went to a magic show and Year 3,4 and 5 pupils travelled on a steam train with other schools in the A16 network group. All of these were very worthwhile and show your enjoyment of school and your good progress. I particularly enjoyed spending time in lessons and I will remember the science lesson and the discoveries you made during your investigations for a long time.

Your school is a good school. You enjoy learning because teaching is good. The subjects you learn are presented in an interesting way and help you to make good progress not only in your knowledge but also in your skills. School is a happy place. The staff look after you well and give you lots of chances to help to run activities. I was impressed with the work of the school council, which is making a real difference to how your school develops. You are assessing the quality of your own work well and keep your targets in mind when judging your work.

The school is led well by your headteacher, who is moving the school forward in lots of different ways. There are other things the school is going to do to improve it further. Planning and resources for those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are going to be reviewed to help more of you reach your early learning goals. Attainment needs to rise more through the school so writing skills will be given very careful attention, your progress will be regularly checked in science and all tasks will make you think hard! I am delighted that parents are so happy with the school but it would be great for them to be involved in your learning as well. The headteacher is very keen for this to happen.

All the best for the future and keep learning!

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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