

Sutton St James Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120420
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291724
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	George Knights

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 on roll	
School	127
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Cleland
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2006
School address	Bells Drove Sutton St James Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 0JG
Telephone number	01945440209
Fax number	01945 440209

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school to the south east of Spalding, serving the villages of Sutton St James, Sutton St Edmund, Holbeach St Johns and their surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible to free school meals is below average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils have identified learning difficulties or disabilities but the number having a statement of special education needs is average. Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sutton St James provides its pupils with a satisfactory and improving education. At the time of the previous inspection the school was judged to have serious weaknesses but this is no longer the case. Effective leadership and management have brought about good progress since that time and inspection findings support the school's own judgement that all aspects of its provision are now at least satisfactory. Over the past two years, steady progress has been made in improving what the school offers. A detailed and well thought through plan for long-term improvement has been implemented, standards have risen and pupils are now achieving better than at any time in the recent past. Underpinning these improvements has been the strong but quiet leadership of the headteacher. He works well with his colleagues and with members of an increasingly effective governing body to improve all aspects of the school's provision. The school provides sound value for money.

Pupils make a secure start in the Reception Year, where provision and standards are satisfactory and where pupils quickly settle into school routines. In the recent past, older pupils have not done as well as they should have done. However, improvements in teaching have ensured that the progress and achievement of all pupils currently in school are satisfactory, with some achieving well. Teachers' records show that pupils currently in the school are working at average standards, with pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieving particularly well. Standards in reading and science, particularly, have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Pupils' personal development is good and they enjoy their time in school. They work and play well together and their behaviour is good. They seek to help whenever they can, such as when older pupils help younger ones with their reading. Attendance has improved considerably in the past two years. Because teachers encourage them to become more involved in lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They value the good feedback they receive about how well they are doing and thus they are keen to improve their work. Teaching is now at least satisfactory in all classes and is often good. Effective monitoring of classrooms has enabled the school to identify where further improvements are needed in order to secure greater consistency and to enable all pupils to make good progress. An effective curriculum engages and interests pupils, and theme weeks, such as that taking place during the inspection on applications of information and communication technology, enrich this well.

The school takes good care of its pupils and guides them well. Good steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe in school and are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Communications with parents have improved and most parents are now rightly confident that their children are happy and well cared for at school. A small number of parents still do not feel that the school takes account of their ideas or concerns. Pupils contribute well to the community but, currently, they do not believe that their school council is an effective way for their ideas to be heard and acted upon.

Good progress has been made in extending management roles and responsibilities, but further work remains in sharing responsibilities for leadership of work in different subjects. Teachers work very well as a team, providing mutual support as each seeks to improve their practice. Because of this commitment, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school in order to ensure that all pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Extend the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders.
- Further strengthen communication with parents so that all are aware of how the school is bringing about the improvements it is making.
- Develop the effectiveness of the school council as a means of enabling pupils' ideas to be better heard and acted upon.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children make steady progress during Reception Year, particularly in building their confidence as learners and improving their skills in communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. Hence, by the time they enter Year 1, they are working at standards typical of five year olds. In 2006 results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were average. In Year 6 tests, results were below average, representing slow progress and unsatisfactory achievement for those pupils. Decisive action has been taken to ensure that pupils currently in the school do not under-achieve and there is compelling evidence that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are achieving well. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average in English, mathematics and science across the school. Improvements have been made in writing and science, in which pupils were underachieving at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and hence pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities do as well as others. The school did not meet its targets in 2006. It has set challenging but achievable targets for 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils like coming to school, where they work and play well together. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and feel safe and well cared for. Attendance has improved considerably and is broadly average. Behaviour is good and pupils have all signed up to a commitment to remove bullying from the school. They develop in confidence as they move through the school, building on the effective work in the Reception Year to help them become fully integrated into school life. They are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and they enjoy activities such as the 'activate' sessions. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, but they would like their school council to be more effective in enabling their views and ideas to be heard and acted on. They raise funds for charities and are developing an awareness that they are growing up in a multicultural society. The school makes a sound contribution to pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are striving to meet their aim of improving 'the learning ability of all pupils' and have ensured good improvement in teaching and learning

since the previous inspection. Some lessons are lively and interesting but a few lack vitality and are not stimulating pupils effectively. Satisfactory attention is being paid to ensuring that tasks are challenging for pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and this helps to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. A consistently good feature of lessons is the way teaching encourages pupils to consider what they have learned from the activities they have been involved in. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work well. A regular and rigorous programme of observation of lessons, absent at the time of the previous inspection, has now been implemented. This has highlighted both strengths and areas where teaching can be improved, thus ensuring that all teachers are aware of how they can make pupils' learning more effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum because it meets the needs of all its pupils well. Learning is enriched by the inclusion of themed weeks, such as those exploring musicals and uses of information and communication technology. Activities such as these help pupils understand how work in different subjects fits together. The school has produced detailed plans to make even stronger links between different parts of the curriculum next year. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection to ensure that work is well matched to the ages and abilities of each pupil in mixed-age classes. A good programme of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. Pupils value these, as they do the range of clubs and other activities they take part in at lunchtime and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for child protection are secure, health and safety procedures are effective, and checks on possible risks to pupils' safety are carried out regularly. Arrangements to promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles are sound. Action to improve attendance has been effective. Procedures for promoting good behaviour, tolerance and respect for others are good and hence the school is a harmonious community. Communication with parents has improved considerably, but some parents still do not feel that the school takes full account of their suggestions and concerns. Arrangements for tracking pupils' achievements are good and information on pupils' progress is used well to guide action taken to support any pupil who may be underachieving. Good attention is paid to guiding pupils with identified learning difficulties or disabilities. Effective links with other agencies are used to promote pupils' well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A new leadership team is working well and has yet to have a full impact on pupils' progress. The headteacher provides effective leadership. He ensures that staff and governors work well together to help achieve the school's aims. He is ably supported by dedicated colleagues who work well together as a team. Accurate evaluation of how well it is doing has helped the school to plan for, and implement, effective changes to bring about good improvement since the previous inspection. Good use is made of the information held about pupils' progress so that the needs of all are met equally well. Sound progress has been made in strengthening the role

of subject leaders, but more remains to be done to ensure that leadership responsibilities are shared widely across the staff. Governance is good. Governors are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities well. They have, with the headteacher, managed resources soundly during a time of tight budget constraints.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sutton St James Community Primary School, Sutton St James, Lincolnshire, PE12 0JG

I would like to thank you all very much for making me feel welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. I really enjoyed coming to your lessons, joining you in assembly and watching you play together. Thank you for talking to me about your work and helping me to find my way around.

I was pleased to see how much you enjoy the school and was impressed by the way you work together well in groups. You are keen to help one another, for example when older pupils volunteer to help younger ones with their reading. I really enjoyed being part of your activity week looking at the many uses of computers and other technology. There are clearly some budding weathermen at Sutton St James, and some good newspaper reporters too. However, I'm still not sure whether Humpty fell or was pushed! Your teachers work hard for you and they have improved their teaching. This means that you are all doing even better than you have done in the past. I have asked your teachers to continue this improvement so that all lessons are as good as the best. I know that they have some exciting plans for providing more lively topics for you to study next year.

You obviously feel very safe in school. This is because your teachers and other members of staff get to know you well. They care for you and make sure that you get the support you need. I was pleased to see that you had all signed a commitment to drive bullying out of your school. You told me that you did not think that your school council was as useful as it could be. I have therefore asked your teachers to see what they can do to make it work better for you. I have also asked them to make sure that all your parents know really well what is happening in the school.

Your school is well run. Teachers and other staff work very well together to do their best for you. I have asked your headteacher to share out some tasks, so that other teachers can take a stronger lead in subjects such as English and mathematics. I send my very best wishes to you. I hope that you all do very well in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Knights

Lead Inspector