

Sutton St James Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120420
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339688
Inspection dates	10–11 June 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	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Horsfield
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Cleland
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed five teachers over eight lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation about pupils' progress and attainment, the school improvement plan and the minutes of governing body meetings. Questionnaires from 46 parents were analysed.

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

- the achievement of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, particularly in writing
- how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those capable of reaching higher levels are provided for and supported, and how this is demonstrated in the progress that they make
- the extent of the effectiveness of the Reception class in laying a solid foundation for children's learning and development throughout the school.

Information about the school

This is a small school compared to others of its type. It serves children from Sutton St James and outlying villages. The number on roll has fallen and from September 2010 the number of classes will be reduced from five to four. All pupils are White British. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A lower than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs.

The school has been awarded Investors in People status and has achieved Healthy Schools status. It works in partnership with several local primary and secondary schools to extend the provision for pupils.

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

This is a satisfactory school. It is moving forward because it has improved the systems for checking its performance and is acting promptly on its findings to improve provision and outcomes. The impact on pupils' achievement, through the increasingly focused work of the literacy and numeracy subject leaders, sound teaching and the specific focus on areas of weakness in pupils' learning, is satisfactory. It demonstrates the school's sound capacity for further improvement. This is confirmed by the effective governing body, who are robust in reviewing the school's work, challenging its performance and influencing its development. Most areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed. However, parental responses still illustrate concerns about the quality of communication between home and the senior management of the school, particularly about proposed changes, how their children progress and how to support their children's learning.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress towards their early learning goals. In particular, well-planned activities, which cater effectively for children of all abilities, and thorough assessment practices, ensure that the children are well prepared for Year 1. Pupils' good personal development, including expectations that they will contribute to the work of the school through roles of responsibility, begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It includes good behaviour and attendance, which continue throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Year 1 and Year 2.

By the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress due to sound provision. Standards are in line with national averages. Not enough focus, though, is given to planning tasks that meet closely the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are more able. This group does not as a matter of course have the structured support provided for pupils of other ability levels. Thus, the level of challenge is often inappropriate, restricting the pace of these pupils' progress. Assessment of pupils' learning, as some other aspects of teaching, shows inconsistency. Marking of pupils' work in some classes is very precise about what they need to do to move forward in their learning. Other teachers' marking is less helpful. Although pupils have targets, these are often not given enough emphasis in lessons, reducing pupils' understanding of the levels at which they are working. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory and accelerating because of the staff's focus on their specific needs and very regular, good-quality support. Similarly, the emphasis on raising achievement in Year 5 and Year 6, especially in writing but also in reading and mathematics, has been successful. The most recent tracking, and inspection evidence, point to Year 6 pupils achieving levels that demonstrate sound progress in writing, as well as reading and

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mathematics. Year 5 pupils are also making satisfactory gains in their learning, including in writing, and the school continues to make this a major focus. The school is aware that tracking of pupils' work, although sound, does not give an overview of attainment and progress at every stage of pupils' learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - planning for provision always takes fully into account the levels at which pupils are working, including higher attaining pupils, so that the tasks they are given provide a good level of challenge
 - marking of pupils' work is regular and tells them their achievements and how to make further progress
 - pupils' targets are a major focus in lessons, giving them more understanding of the levels at which they are working and their achievement.
- Expand the tracking and recording of pupils' progress to give a more detailed overview of their attainment and progress at every stage of their learning.
- Work with the governing body to strengthen home/school relationships further through:
 - providing regular opportunities for parents and carers to attend meetings about the school's work and plans, and to participate in workshops that will enable them to support their children's learning
 - ensuring that parents and carers have regular information about their children's progress.
- 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 show positive attitudes to school, with many saying how much they enjoy being there. Much is expected of them by the staff in terms of their effort and their contribution to the school. Pupils make a difference to the school environment in the responsibilities that they take on and so does the school council; for example, it worked with local businesses to raise money for the trim trail. Such enterprise activities extend pupils' personal and academic skills and ensure their sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

Fundamental to this is pupils' satisfactory progress throughout the school, although in some lessons, progress is more rapid. This was evident in a lesson on letters and sounds. Pupils were put into small groups with others working at the same level. Work matched their needs accurately and tasks were imaginatively presented, including a computer-generated programme for those at the earlier stages. Good support by teachers and teaching assistants and specific questioning, both to reinforce and extend

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learning, resulted in pupils' good progress. Similarly in an English lesson, the good knowledge of the teacher and step-by-step tasks enabled pupils to build up their skills to construct an effective story structure. There is less emphasis on pupils' developing a greater responsibility for their learning. Pupils generally speak vaguely about what they have to be able to do to move on in their learning because levels and targets are often not a major focus in lessons. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is accelerating because of very specific support programmes and the careful guidance of teaching assistants. However, there are no formal systems for recording achievements and milestones for those pupils with an individual education plan so that it is difficult to assess accurately the pace of their progress and whether their new skills are secure. More able pupils make satisfactory progress overall, rather than good, because work for them is too similar to that for other groups of pupils and is not often carefully enough planned to extend their skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is satisfactory overall, with the school identifying pupils' cultural development as a developing aspect of its work. Opportunities for reflection are increasingly built in to learning. Pupils are increasingly able to link their actions with potential consequences and, aided by a programme of learning, they demonstrate their good understanding of the need to keep fit, eat healthily and remain safe.

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	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	2

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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How effective is the provision?

Although there is some good teaching, there is inconsistency in practice, including in the presentation of pupils' work and in marking. Where planning is detailed and takes into account the learning needs of pupils, and when questioning is specific and probing, pupils make good progress. Lessons are usually well-balanced, giving pupils ample time to practise what they have learnt. The pace is usually brisk. Good relationships between staff and pupils enhance the learning environment. A positive and developing aspect in many lessons is the opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own work and one another's, thus enhancing their critical thinking.

Increasingly the school is weaving literacy, numeracy, science and information and communications technology into creative themes, promoting greater opportunities for pupils to learn in depth and independently. The choice of topics and ways of learning suit boys and girls equally well. A well-planned personal, social and health education programme is taught discretely and messages, reinforced through other lessons and in daily routines, promote pupils' good personal development. The school uses its partnerships with other schools and its sports coaches to enhance the curriculum, including extra music provision, visits, and science workshops, for example, for Year 4 pupils. The recent award of Healthy School status reflects the increasing range and take-up of activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, matching closely pupils' specific needs. That for gifted and talented pupils is a developing aspect.

The staff know all pupils well and this is significant in pupils' sense of security, trust and happiness in school. Parents are confident in the quality of the school's care for their children. The pastoral team works efficiently, effectively and caringly following its prompt identification of pupils' individual social and behavioural issues. As a result, there have been significant improvements in their attitudes to, and readiness for, learning. Constructive partnerships with outside agencies strengthen the support available for pupils. Teaching assistants enable pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult to move forward securely in their learning.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school. The staff are involved in school improvement planning and share the ambition of senior staff in moving the school forward. In particular, subject leaders' greater focus on pupils' performance has resulted in more robust analyses of their progress. The quality of data about pupils' progress has improved, although there is not a detailed overview of achievement as pupils move through the school. Recent staff changes have been managed effectively by the headteacher, who is spending more time in the classroom, closing gaps in learning that are evident from earlier staffing difficulties. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the curriculum has resulted in the school's secure understanding of its priorities for improvement. It reflects the school's satisfactory performance in ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils and the tackling of any discrimination. The governing body is an asset to the school because through extensive involvement in its work and its robustness, it is able to influence future direction. It oversees safeguarding procedures conscientiously, demonstrating rigour in evaluating and reviewing procedures and practices. Community cohesion is work in progress. While local links are established, a programme of learning to promote cohesion further afield is being developed. Wide ranging partnerships, including those with local schools, extend the pupils' learning opportunities and promote their good personal development and sound achievement.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Most children join the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills that are broadly as expected for their age, though this varies from year to year. The school's

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excellent partnerships with the playgroup and carefully planned arrangements ensure that the children settle down quickly. They make friends, behave well and support each other in the harmonious learning environment, responding to the staff's high expectations. Constructive relationships with parents through the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that the school holds all of the information about the children's needs and circumstances, facilitating their good progress. Children's learning is aided by workshops for parents, which are built into the Early Years Foundation Stage and which enable them to support their children's learning.

The children make good progress, and excellent progress in letters and sounds. They display very positive attitudes to learning because activities are imaginatively planned, capturing their imagination and challenging them well. Some resources, though, are old and outdated. Outdoor learning is a fruitful extension to classroom learning, enabling the children to broaden their range of skills. Leadership and management of the stage is good and provision is constantly being reviewed and improved. Teaching is supported by daily assessments of children's achievements which are recorded in comprehensive profiles. Children's work shows that their standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are above average this year although they vary from year to year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most of those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were supportive of all aspects of the school's work. However, over a quarter expressed concerns about aspects of leadership and management of the school. They related to communication, particularly about staffing, and changes in the organisation of teaching groups. A similar proportion of parents and carers felt that information about their children's progress was not shared with them regularly enough. Comments have been shared with the headteacher while totally preserving the confidentiality of the process.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sutton St James Community 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	57	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	61	14	30	4	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	30	19	41	10	22	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	39	18	39	9	20	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	17	37	24	52	3	7	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	39	14	30	13	28	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	39	27	59	1	2	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)	16	35	21	46	6	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	37	19	41	10	22	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	39	18	39	7	15	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	30	21	46	6	13	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	14	30	18	39	6	13	6	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	35	22	48	7	15	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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 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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for welcoming us into your school when we visited it recently. We enjoyed meeting you, talking with you and watching you learn and play.

Your school is a satisfactory school in which you are making sound progress. You enjoy school, including the clubs, meeting your friends and the opportunities to learn. You feel safe there. We were pleased to find out that your attendance and behaviour are good. You enjoy learning through topics and you say that the partnerships with other schools give you chances to learn extra skills.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some good teaching. In good lessons, the work that you are given is at just the right level and gives you a good level of challenge so that you make quicker progress. I have asked the headteacher to make sure that this is the case in all lessons. He is also going to check that marking of your work tells you how to make further progress. There will be a greater focus in lessons on your targets and what the levels you are working at stand for. The staff record your progress regularly and I have asked the headteacher to extend what is recorded so that they can see the big picture of your progress over time. Your parents and carers are generally happy with the school but some of them have worries about a few things, including communication between home and school. The school will work with the governors to strengthen relationships.

I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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