

Flintham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122643
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327772
Inspection date	28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	108
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Alton
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Edmonds
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Inholms Road Flintham Newark Nottinghamshire NG23 5LF
Telephone number	01636 525371
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the school's strategies for increasing higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2, particularly in writing
- how the school is continuing to develop its curriculum to enhance pupils' thinking, enquiry and decision making skills through cross-curricular work and exploration of global issues
- how well the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has been improved through the development of outdoor play provision.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, sampling of pupils' work, scrutiny of school documentation, assessment, tracking and target setting data and information. Discussions were held with the headteacher, pupils, parents, teachers, governors and the school's improvement partner. An analysis of parental questionnaires was also carried out. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Flintham is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs, is below the picture found nationally. These pupils have, for example, moderate or specific learning difficulties. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in a Reception and Year 1 mixed-age class. A small percentage of the younger Early Years Foundation Stage children attend part time. The school has gained Healthy Schools Gold status, Activemark for its commitment to physical education, Investors in People and a prestigious Eco School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Flintham is an outstanding school that continues to go from strength to strength. Here is a school that under the dynamic and inspirational leadership of the headteacher shows no sense of complacency and leaves no stone unturned in its continual quest for sustained success. The school was judged as outstanding at its last inspection but this has not stopped the headteacher leading the drive to set the bar of expectation even higher. Equally important is that he has brought staff, pupils, parents and governors with him on this exciting journey. Parents are highly appreciative and supportive of the education and activities the school provides and many wrote glowing comments. One comment succinctly and accurately sums of the feelings of many others, 'This is truly a wonderful school and we are delighted with the progress our children have made.' There has been continued commitment to make teaching and learning even more successful and exciting, assessment sharper and the accommodation more vibrant, and these are just some features that have been tackled since the last inspection and are markers laid down to clearly demonstrate that the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Attainment when children start at the school is a little above the level expected overall for children of this age but is sometimes lower in communication skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make excellent progress in the Reception Year and this provides a bedrock for future success. Pupils continue to make at least very good and at times outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that have been significantly above the national average over a number of years by the end of Year 2. Outstanding progress and achievement in Years 3 to 6 means that by the time pupils leave school, standards are often exceptionally high in key subjects such as English, mathematics and science and pupils show high standards of work in other subjects such as information and communication technology and history. This trend is set to continue. A significant strength of the school is the way in which it quickly identifies and tackles any weaknesses. The school flagged up the necessity to increase the number of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment, particularly in writing, by the end of Year 2. Well-planned strategies in letters and sound work, use of drama and exciting writing stimuli have produce exactly the results the school has been looking for and standards are set to rise to their highest level in recent years.

The school keeps a very close eye on how pupils of all abilities, ages and different genders are doing. Factors such as pupil mobility and personal and social issues are all evaluated for their impact on the progress of each and every individual. The excellent assessment and tracking systems instigated by the headteacher mean that no pupil is left behind because any hint of underachievement is responded to by excellent intervention and support strategies that help to ensure that the progress of all pupils is equally strong. This is fuelled still further by the setting of highly aspirational individual targets for pupils, which are usually met. The role played by the pupils themselves in this whole process cannot be underestimated. They have an excellent knowledge of the targets and levels they are aspiring to and play a pivotal role in setting targets of their own. As one pupil said, 'We set ourselves pretty challenging targets and go for them!' While academic guidance is outstanding, so is pupils' pastoral care. Pupils feel safe and valued and know they have a voice that is listened to and respected. Their care and welfare is afforded the highest priority and safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils' recognise and greatly appreciate that their individuality is both recognised and celebrated.

It is not just pupil involvement in their target setting that is a significant strength. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is

outstanding. Pupils are major players in helping to make Flintham the success story it is. Their behaviour is exemplary and their love and enjoyment of school tangible. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are highly motivated individuals who show a great desire to do well and are extremely polite and courteous. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to follow healthy and safe lives and have written school rules to promote internet safety for children in school. Their contribution to the school and wider community is immense. Their roles as school councillors, play leaders and bus-stop buddies, as well as in many monitoring tasks, organising fund-raising events, running fruit shops and their innovative 'growing green' activities, are just some shining examples of their value to the community. They are also extremely active and influential figures in many village events and happenings and help organise recycling and energy saving projects. When these skills are added to their high academic achievements it is easy to see why they leave school as exceptionally well-rounded individuals more than ready to face future challenges.

Teaching is outstanding because it is challenging and engaging. Relationships are excellent and there is a genuine working partnership between adults and pupils in every class. Teachers are excellent at outlining what is needed to be successful in learning and pupils invariably rise to the challenges set. Lessons are often packed with pace and high expectations and the balance between teacher and pupil talk is just about right. Just occasionally these ingredients are not all present to ensure a consistently outstanding recipe for success. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. The quality of marking is often of a very high standard and gives excellent pointers for improvement that the pupils readily take on board. Pupils' learning and enjoyment is strengthened by the outstanding curriculum on offer which embraces an excellent array of enrichment activities including residential visits, visitors and many after-school clubs. During the school day, pupils are given the opportunity to learn a foreign language and play a musical instrument. The school ensures that the provision made for pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and those with particular talents, is excellent. Literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developed exceptionally well. There are many excellent examples of these skills being put to highly effective use across different subjects. In its quest to develop pupils' skills still further the school has rightly identified the need and drawn up plans to extend pupils' thinking, problem-solving, investigative and decision-making skills through differing activities, themes and projects, of which some will have more global and culturally diverse perspectives. Such practice is not yet embedded.

Central to the success of the school is the outstanding calibre of leadership and management at differing levels. The headteacher is at the forefront in ensuring that rigorous and robust monitoring, data analyses and highly effective self-evaluation bring about actions that result in rapid and sustained improvements. He benefits from excellent support and input from senior staff and subject and phase leaders. Governance is outstanding because governors play a highly influential role in both supporting and holding the school to account for the education it provides. They are fully involved in the strategic development of the school. There is a very strong sense of team spirit evident because the contributions of all that work at the school are highly valued. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school works superbly well to reach out and involve all families and the local community and community relationships are excellent. The school has instigated links with a school in Kenya and although pupils' cultural awareness is good, plans are rightly in hand to make pupils' awareness of their position in a global and diverse community as strong as their local one. The school's many outstanding strengths and first-class education make a difference to the lives of the children and families the school serves and the quest for even greater successes is in very accomplished hands.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children of all abilities make excellent progress and reach levels securely above those expected for children of this age by the end of the Reception Year. The levels of care and support are excellent and contribute significantly to children's excellent behaviour and personal development. Teaching is of high calibre because it provides a vibrant array of activities that enthuse and challenge the children and allows them to find things out for themselves. Very carefully considered support enables all children to feel cared for, listened to and totally engaged in a very busy and productive learning environment. Highly effective assessment procedures, which have been recently refined, together with outstanding leadership that constantly monitors and improves practice, impact significantly on making provision as good as it is. There have been significant improvements to the outdoor play area which is now exceptionally attractive and inviting, extremely well used, a feast for the eyes and represents the best of Early Years practice. Induction arrangements when children first start at the school are highly regarded by parents who speak very positively about 'this unique setting' and 'applaud' the provision made by staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the existing plans to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving, thinking, enquiry and decision-making skills through different themes, activities and projects, of which some have a global and culturally diverse steer and perspective.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Flintham Primary School, Flintham, Newark, NG23 5LF

Thank you so much for making our visit one that we will remember for a long time to come. We really enjoyed ourselves and it was a pleasure to talk to many of you, particularly the pupils I had a chat with in the staff room. It was great to hear how much you love coming to school, how exciting and interesting you find your lessons, and how much you enjoy the visits and after-school clubs. The way you help with recycling and 'growing green' is very impressive. I was also very pleased to hear that you feel very safe in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you have any concerns whatsoever.

Having looked in detail at many different features of school life at Flintham, there was only one decision we could come to and that is Flintham is an outstanding school! Like you we think that teaching, the curriculum and how well you are cared for are all outstanding. The school does an excellent job at helping you to keep healthy and the terrific array of activities that are on offer both within and outside of the school day all help Flintham to be such an exciting place to be. Mr Edmonds is a first-class headteacher and all the staff and governors work extremely well together to make sure you get the best possible education. When all these strengths are put together it is easy to see why you make such outstanding progress and reach exceptionally high standards by the time that you leave the school.

There is one other strength that I have not mentioned yet that really puts the icing on the cake in making Flintham as good as it is. That is you! Your excellent behaviour, attitudes and enthusiasm. Your contribution to the school and knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Each and everyone of you are great ambassadors for the school!

Even outstanding schools such as yours can improve. I have asked Mr Edmonds and the staff to provide more opportunities for you to develop your problem-solving, thinking and decision-making skills by looking more at the lives and events in different countries and cultures. I know that you will want to play your part in making sure that Flintham stays top of the league by behaving and working as exceptionally well as you do now. It was a privilege to meet you all and I wish you every success in the future.

Martin Newell

Lead inspector