

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

OFSTED INSPECTIONS

OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcomes of the Ofsted inspections of the following schools: Berkeley Junior School, Grange Lane Infant School and St Bede's Catholic School – A Mathematics and Computing College.
- 1.2 The schools were inspected as part of the routine Ofsted inspection cycle for schools.
- 1.3 This is now a three-year cycle.
- 1.4 Full copies of the reports are available in the political Group offices.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 There is no background information attached to this report.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 **Berkeley Junior School** was inspected February 2009

Strengths and weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

- Pupils are above average in English, reflecting the priority this subject has been given over the past two years.
- The school is still working to address a legacy of underachievement in mathematics. Inspection evidence points to pupils currently making good progress in mathematics.
- The school is currently looking closely at the progress of those deemed to be gifted or talented to see if they could possibly be doing better.

Personal development and well-being

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their well-being are outstanding.
- The pupils' behaviour is excellent; exclusion is virtually unheard of and pupils strongly express the view that they feel safe, happy and free from any form of harassment.
- Members of the school council are excellent ambassadors of the school, speaking proudly of their contribution to school improvement.
- Pupils wholeheartedly join in with physical activities.

Teaching and learning

- Teaching and learning are good. No inadequate teaching was seen and one lesson was outstanding.
- Teachers are confident and are happy to tolerate the noise of pupils talking excitedly about their work and helping one another.
- No time was wasted in managing errant behaviour and this is mainly because good, ongoing assessment ensures that the tasks they are set are interesting, fun and usually well matched to individual abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

- The school has a good, well enriched curriculum and it meets the National Curriculum requirements. French is taught across the whole school.
- Subject leaders are carefully monitoring their subjects to ensure that avenues of learning build upon previous experiences, allowing pupils to put their existing knowledge to good use and thus speeding up progress.
- There is a wide range of well attended clubs and after-school activities and, although there are relatively few educational visits, there is a good programme of visiting speakers and performers.
- The decision to teach literacy in mixed ability groups has been such a success that the initiative has been extended to the teaching of numeracy this year. There is evidence, however, that some teachers are finding it more difficult to cope with the wide range of ability in numeracy than they did in literacy.

Care, guidance and support

- The care, guidance and support of pupils are good and rigorous measures are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe and well protected.
- Supportive arrangements for vulnerable pupils include good quality nurturing by a learning mentor and the existence of a 'talk-to' box where pupils can post notes about any concerns they have and name the adult they would like to talk to about them.
- Good academic guidance is informed by accurate checking of individual progress and good support is made available to pupils who appear to be experiencing difficulties.

Leadership and management

- Leadership, management and governance are good and rigorous self-evaluation involves all staff and governors.
- Subject leadership is good overall, but changes in the leadership of mathematics are too recent to have had an impact on published standards in the subject.
- The head teacher leads a passionate drive to ensure that pupils feel that they belong to a strong school community in which their views are listened to and acted upon.

This is a good school and the outstanding leadership of the head teacher has set an example for good, perceptive leadership and management at all levels across the school. School improvement is good and continues to pick up speed because this is an increasingly happy school, with a committed staff contributing to securing bright futures for pupils. The governing body has played its part in these improvements through judicious appointments of teachers and leaders.

A large part of the school's success stems from the exceptional way in which it works so effectively with parents, other schools and the many other agencies and professionals who contribute to pupils' well-being and prospects for the future.

Pupils' achievement is good because they are taught effectively, behave extremely well and are very keen to learn.

The curriculum is good and this contributes enormously to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good attendance. Parents express confidence in the care and support their children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that work is closely matched to the full range of ability in each class and monitoring closely the effectiveness of new strategies and organisation of the subject.

3.2 Grange Lane Infants' School was inspected February 2009

Strengths and weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been below national figures since 2005.
- Although teacher assessments indicate standards have remained static over the last three years some of this apparent lack of progress can be attributed to more children starting in the nursery with lower levels of skills.
- A thorough tracking and assessment system shows progress is improving.

Personal development and well-being

- Personal development and well-being of pupils are satisfactory.
- Behaviour overall is satisfactory and for some it is good.
- Attendance figures are well below the national average and the school's efforts to promote better attendance with pupils and with parents are yet to pay dividends.

Teaching and learning

- Teaching is satisfactory.
- Where teaching is stronger, classroom assistants are used effectively to support learning, questioning is more skilful, plenaries are better and appropriate learning objectives are shared with pupils. Where teaching is weaker, tasks are not challenging or exciting enough to help pupils develop different ways of learning or take the initiative for their own progress.
- Available assessment is not used consistently by all staff in planning activities to challenge and motivate pupils to participate in their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

- The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets statutory requirements and responds to pupils' needs.
- The range of support programmes aimed at boosting pupils' academic achievement has recently developed, with an appropriate focus on writing, however pupils' skills in literacy do not yet develop at a good rate.
- Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors, which enhances curriculum provision.

Care, guidance and support

- Pupils are not yet fully involved in understanding how well they are getting on and their next steps in learning and opportunities to guide pupils, through informative marking, are overlooked. However, improved tracking is spotting peaks and troughs in pupils' performance and enabling staff to spot and provide additional support when needed.
- There are good strategies in place to ensure that the needs of pupils most at risk and their families are well supported.

Leadership and management

- The headteacher knows the school well and has an appropriate focus on raising standards and achievement and improving teaching and learning.
- The head teacher is well supported by other leaders who are committed to school improvement.
- Staff hold regular meetings to review pupils' progress and this is promoting more staff accountability, but has yet to fully impact on standards and achievements.

- Governors are supported and becoming increasingly involved in the work of the school, but presently do not fulfil all their statutory duties.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are secure but some aspects of routine health and safety are not always kept up to date.

The inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that this is a satisfactory school. Achievement for all pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, throughout the school is satisfactory.

Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and pupils generally have positive attitudes towards their lessons. There is a focus on care, establishing routines and working together harmoniously in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which appropriately continues throughout the school. Pupils feel safe, and happily accept responsibilities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and priorities for improvement are correctly identified. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further, however, at present, management roles and responsibilities are not yet clearly defined to enable leaders to play a full part in monitoring and evaluating the performance of different areas in the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children start in the Nursery, skills are well below those typically expected of their age. Children learn in a warm and caring environment with positive relationships. Close attention is given to developing children's social skills so that taking turns, sharing and establishing routines are always high on the agenda. The school has improved the learning environment, including the outdoor areas, and provides a satisfactory range of activities. By the time they leave the Reception class, children have made satisfactory progress but standards remain well below average particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Recent changes to the way that children's small steps in progress are recorded are helping to more swiftly identify where learning is too slow, however this information is not always used effectively to plan next learning steps.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing, and ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring all teachers use assessment systems rigorously to inform planning and accelerate learning.
- Define the roles and extend the skills of leaders and managers at all levels so that responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance can be more effectively shared.
- Ensure governors fulfil all statutory requirements.
- Improve attendance.

3.3 **St Bede's Catholic School – A Mathematics and Computing College** was inspected in February 2009

Strengths and weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

- The number of students gaining five higher grade passes including English and mathematics rose sharply in 2008 and is now in line with national averages.
- Results at Key Stage 3 have risen in 2008 in all core subjects and are now close to national standards, reversing the previous downwards trend. Improved teaching and learning has played a major part in the improvement in results.
- Higher attaining students make satisfactory progress because the level of challenge within lessons is not sufficient to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding so that they can attain the highest grades at GCSE.

Personal development and well-being

- The personal development and well-being of students are good with outstanding features.
- Students enjoy school and this can be seen in their good attendance and their willingness to get involved in the extra-curricular and enrichment activities on offer.
- Students have a good understanding of what is required to sustain healthy lifestyles such as participating in regular physical activities and taking advantage of the healthy eating options.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is excellent.

Teaching and learning

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school with some elements of good and outstanding teaching. The amount of good teaching is increasing but there is more to do to make teaching and learning good overall.
- Students for whom English is not their first language receive good support.
- Students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities are included in all activities, receive effective support when they need it and are able to follow a good range of courses suited to their needs and as a consequence, they make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

- The accelerated Key Stage 3 curriculum is raising standards and enabling students to spend three years on GCSE courses in some subjects and achieve good results.

- The school's status as a mathematics and computing college has brought particular benefits to provision in information and communication technology (ICT) though, as yet, the impact is less obvious in mathematics.
- The provision of BTEC courses is promoting better achievement for average and lower attaining students.
- The school has developed a series of effective intervention strategies to boost progress in Year 11.

Care, guidance and support

- The quality of care, guidance and support is good with particular effective pastoral care which supports students' good personal development.
- All the required safeguarding procedures are in place.
- Academic monitoring for all students is rigorous and accurate. The process identifies underachievement and prompts early intervention programmes at whole school level.

Leadership and management

- Leadership and management are good and leadership at all levels has ensured that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection and tackled the weaknesses effectively.
- The good leadership of the head teacher, senior managers, middle leaders and governors has ensured that the school has moved forward well on a number of fronts.
- Subject leaders have risen well to the challenge of improving provision of learning.
- Governors have extensive knowledge of the school and they are fully supportive, well informed and prepared to challenge and defend the school.

The school's specialism in computing has had a positive impact on provision and standards. There is still some legacy of underachievement in mathematics but under new leadership the department is well led and managed and provision in mathematics is good.

The school's senior leadership team has been effective in developing a good distributed management system. The school is aware of the need to strengthen provision for the more able and academic students to ensure they are able to fulfil their ambitions.

Inspection found teaching to be satisfactory with increasingly good and some outstanding practice. Some outstanding teaching was seen in mathematics and modern languages.

Achievement is satisfactory. There has been an upturn in performance of students overall that is linked to improved teaching and the good curriculum which enables students to choose from a wide range of courses that suit their individual needs. Overall standards are average and rising.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able students are sufficiently challenged in their learning.
- Sharpen the regular feedback that students receive in lessons and in the marking of homework.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member may wish to write to each Head teacher regarding the outcomes of their inspection.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 There are no financial implications.

5.2 Staffing

- 5.2.1 There are no staffing implications.

5.3 Statutory

- 5.3.1 There are no statutory implications.

5.4 IT

- 5.4.1 There are no statutory implications.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

- 6.1 Any schools requiring LA intervention will be notified and supported according to the Schools Causing Concern Policy.

6.2 Environmental and Other

- 6.2.1 There are no environmental implications.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with the schools concerned and School Development Plans will address the issues for action.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Continue to support improvements in the schools inspected above.

- 8.2.1 The Cabinet Member will write and make suitable comments to the schools on reports.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Ofsted published report