

Holbeach Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120414
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380014
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Terry Elston

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Isabel Hutchinson
Headteacher	Susan Boor
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry Elston

Additional inspector

Meg Hackney

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited nine lessons taught by seven teachers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curricular planning documents, examples of the ways in which the school supports different groups of pupils, evidence from the school's lesson observations and information from questionnaires completed by 90 parents and carers, pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school, where the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. None speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has recently gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. Spalding Children's Centre is on the school's site. This will be inspected separately.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- The school is satisfactory. By the end of both key stages attainment is average in English and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress from starting points. In English, while most pupils do well in writing, progress in reading is just adequate. Boys' reading lags behind that of girls.
- Children make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with attainment typical for their ages. They enjoy their work and develop their independent learning skills well.
- While the overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning are satisfactory, parents and carers are right to feel that learning is faster in some classes than others. The best teaching inspires pupils to achieve very well but in a small minority of classes progress is just satisfactory.
- Behaviour is satisfactory with pupils showing pride in their school and trying hard to do their best work. Disruption in lessons is rare, but some pupils find it difficult to remember the rules about putting their hands up to answer questions.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in the way they reflect on issues such as the importance of taking care of the environment.
- The leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders work well as a team and their effectiveness in raising standards is seen in the steadily improving national test results in English and mathematics. They evaluate the quality of teaching regularly, but not with sufficient rigour to achieve their aim of consistently good learning in all classes.
- The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of interesting experiences that, as one pupil commented, 'makes coming to school fun.'

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to make as much progress in reading as they do in other subjects by:
 - providing more resources to capture the imagination of boys
 - make sure all staff have the skills to teach those pupils to build sounds into words
 - using the daily dedicated reading sessions more effectively to make sure all pupils make good progress
 - working with parents and carers to ensure that pupils practise their reading at home.

- By July 2012, ensure that pupils in all classes learn equally well by teachers:
 - giving them clear guidelines on how to behave
 - providing clear guidance to them on how to improve their work
 - enabling them to learn effectively by ensuring that all teaching matches the quality of the best.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers rightly feel their children make satisfactory progress but fare better in some classes than others. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a satisfactory start to school. They enter the Reception classes with skills below those typical of their ages and the majority attain the levels expected by the end of the year. The good teaching of early reading skills is evident in the way children learn to build sounds into words. In the main, they develop their social skills well although they sometimes take a while to settle and lose concentration quickly.

At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is broadly average but higher in mathematics and writing than reading. In mathematics, pupils count confidently and make good progress when using their number skills to tackle investigations such as comparing the size of the limbs of boys and girls. Pupils' writing is imaginative and they learn how to compile factual reports with sub-headings. In Years 1 and 2, while attainment in reading is broadly average, girls make faster progress than boys. Some boys in particular find it difficult to build sounds into words and tend to guess when they are unsure.

By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment over recent years in the national tests has been broadly average in both English and mathematics. There is, however, a rising

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trend that is continuing in the current Year 6. These pupils write well and some of their work is of high quality. For example, their writing about a visit to a war museum showed an excellent understanding of how to produce a factual account that was both informative and interesting for the reader. The oldest pupils read confidently, but lower down the key stage boys in particular show less interest in books and struggle to work out unfamiliar words. They are right in feeling that there are not enough books to interest the oldest pupils. Their mathematical skills improve well because of the very effective mental mathematics sessions and good opportunities to use their skills to solve problems. One group made rapid progress when investigating the quantities of liquids needed to make the best fruit cocktail.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They do particularly well in mathematics because of the good teaching of basic numeracy skills. In reading, while progress is satisfactory, few do well enough to develop a love of books and some rarely pick up a book at home.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, parents and carers agree with the inspection evidence that, from the Reception classes onwards, teachers explain new work clearly and make lessons fun. Teachers provide many practical activities to capture pupils' interest and use the interactive whiteboards well to, for example, show the properties of mathematical shapes. Most teachers employ good strategies for managing behaviour and this makes the most of the time in lessons. Where learning is slower these strategies are not applied consistently and this wastes time. Teachers are good at teaching writing and number skills and this gives pupils confidence to tackle challenging work. In reading, however, not all teachers and teaching assistants have the skills to show pupils clearly how to build sounds into words. Teachers do not always use the guided reading sessions well enough. While some of these lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to hone their skills, in others pupils spend too much time setting up the computer program or staring out of the window.

Most teachers provide good guidance in their marking on how pupils can improve their work. When this works best, pupils respond well and indicate in their books what skills they need to develop further. In a minority of classes however, this guidance is scant and limited to congratulatory comments on how well pupils have done.

There is some outstanding teaching that inspires pupils and gives them a sense of pride in their achievements. In these lessons, the teachers stimulate pupils with a lively introduction, provide tasks that challenge all groups and check carefully on their progress throughout.

Teachers provide many opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, one group of pupils wrote sensitively about the importance of helping one another and considered the moral issue of who should be saved in an overcrowded lifeboat.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers, as well as pupils, are right to feel that, while behaviour is often good, it varies from class to class. When teachers make the rules clear pupils listen carefully, value one another's opinions and wait patiently for the opportunity to answer questions. In a minority of classes, however, the teachers accept answers to those who call out and allow a few pupils to disrupt the learning of others. One pupil commented, with justification, 'Sometimes teachers need to be stricter.'

Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare, and that on the few occasions that it happens adults manage it well. This helps them feel safe at school. Records show that action to discourage aggression is effective and has reduced the frequency of incidents. Pupils enjoy their lessons, although some boys told inspectors that they prefer practical subjects such as mathematics and science to reading. Attendance rates are average and the school has been successful in discouraging unnecessary absences through effective communication with parents and carers.

Pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues and speak knowledgeably about the need to keep safe and eat nutritious foods. Older pupils in particular understand the need to take care when using the internet and the potential harm caused by cyber-bullying. They have a good involvement in the community and enjoy performing concerts to the elderly village residents. Pupils reflect deeply on moral issues and even the youngest ones consider what it must have been like during the last war. They have a good awareness of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the world enhanced by regular opportunities to meet people from different religions and backgrounds.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads with a clear view of how to build on the school's strengths while identifying areas for improvement. This has helped raise standards steadily over recent years and rectify weaknesses in the achievements of more-able pupils. The ambition shown by all leaders shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.

The leaders have developed satisfactory procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. These show clearly what teachers do well and how they can improve their work. While they have been largely successful, there remain some shortcomings in the teaching that mean that progress is uneven across the school. Recent training for all staff on the teaching of reading has led to some improvements but some have embraced the techniques better than others.

The leaders have forged good partnerships with parents and carers who appreciate the way the school cares for their children so well. Regular communication between home and school enables them to air their concerns.

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The leaders use data well to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils and identify those who are underperforming. This has prompted a good action plan to plan more topics in the curriculum to fire boys' enthusiasm and provide books to encourage them to read for pleasure at home and school.

The leaders have introduced a broad and balanced curriculum with a sound focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their artistic talents. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors to make learning interesting and an extensive range of clubs after school. The recent focus on encouraging pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects has been successful in raising their attainment.

The governing body supports the school satisfactorily, and has been instrumental in ensuring staff have opportunities to develop their skills through additional training. Its members show a good commitment to safeguarding systems and they meet all statutory requirements, including promoting equality and tackling discrimination. They use their skills satisfactorily to challenge the school's leaders and hold them to account. The school manages a good breakfast club that provides a small number of pupils with an enjoyable, safe and stimulating start for the day.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbeach Primary School, Spalding, PE12 7LZ

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside in the snow. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us or who filled in questionnaires said how much you enjoy your work. Your school is satisfactory, which means that while some things are good, others could be better.

We were impressed with how hard you work. You make satisfactory progress, but some of you do better in writing and mathematics than reading. Most of you behave well, but some keep forgetting the rules about putting their hand up to answer a question. You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Even the youngest ones think a lot about people in the world who are poor and sad. Your headteacher and senior staff know how to improve things and make sure the school runs smoothly. You work hard at the activities provided and enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school. Your teachers make learning fun but you learn faster in some classes than others. They work closely with your parents and carers to make sure they know how well you are doing at school. All staff at the school take good care of you and keep you safe.

The headteacher and your teachers are always looking for ways to improve. We have asked them to:

- help you to make faster progress in reading - you can help by making the most of every opportunity to read at school and home
- make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best ones.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston
Lead inspector.

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