

Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121094
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358927
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Brown
Headteacher	Christine Livings (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
School address	The Street Hockering, Dereham NR20 3HN
Telephone number	01603 880310
Fax number	01603 880418
Email address	office@hockering.norfolk.sch.uk

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St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Four lessons were observed and both class teachers seen twice. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and assistant headteachers from this and another of the schools in the partnership. Discussions were held with representative governors, pupils and the school improvement partner. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, the arrangements for safeguarding and a range of policy and planning documentation. A total of 14 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed, together with nine from staff and 24 from Key Stage 2 pupils at the school.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- The impact on provision of joining with an existing federation of schools.
- The development of the skills in independent learning and research since the last inspection.
- The impact of the development of cross-curricular work on the wider curriculum.
- The pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and ethnic groups.

Information about the school

Hockering Primary is much smaller than average, serving the village and its surrounding area. Every pupil is of White British heritage and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are broadly average. There are currently two pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Since the retirement of the headteacher in 2008, the school has had three temporary headteachers while the governing body pursued a goal of joining with other schools in a partnership and ultimately in a federation. The partnership with two other primary schools came into existence in September 2010 and the formal procedures for joining the existing federation with these schools are being completed. This has helped to secure the long term future of the school under the leadership of an executive headteacher with responsibility for the three schools and an assistant headteacher with day-to-day responsibility at Hockering.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hockering Primary is a good school. The effective governing body, being concerned about the long-term viability of such a small school, has demonstrated effective leadership in remaining focused on securing federation status with other similar schools. The first phase of this plan has come to fruition and has seen the appointment of an effective executive headteacher and assistant headteacher for Hockering, as part of a partnership agreement. Meanwhile, consultations on joining with the existing federation of the other schools proceeds as a matter of urgency.

The benefits for the school have been immediate in terms of ensuring that there is experienced and capable leadership, a wider range of professional expertise and collective resources that are shared between the schools. Curriculum leadership across the schools and collaboration between the teachers are in place, although opportunities to use these to increase cross-curricular work are still developing. Elsewhere, the curriculum demonstrates improvement since the last inspection, sometimes supported by very effective partnerships. 'Energy Busters', a project funded by the local authority and the National Trust, has helped to promote the pupils' skills in independent learning and research, which have also been supported by developing skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Partnerships also support enrichment opportunities, such as the Sports Partnership, which allows a majority of the pupils to take part in activities after school.

The executive headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and has created high expectations among all staff. An experienced member of the support staff wrote, 'I have never felt so positive as I do now regarding the way the school is moving forward.' A current challenge is the need to involve more parents and carers as learning partners to support their children's learning, although parents and carers are keen to support the school at a social level. This allows the school to act as a focus for village life and the pupils enjoy the opportunities that this brings, such as at the harvest festival. The pupils are interested and informed about the world around them, both locally and globally.

The school demonstrates strengths, often arising from the small numbers of pupils, which create a strong family feeling; pupils behave well and support each other, both in work and recreation. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and, because the pupils are so well known to the teachers and their progress is tracked effectively, there is good equality of opportunity that supports every pupil. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as needing additional support, demonstrate progress in line with their peers and all pupils are able to maximise their potential. Safeguarding arrangements are good and monitored effectively, with the pupils and parents and carers all agreeing that this is a safe school.

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With such small year groups, standards vary year by year. In recent years, the pupils have tended to start in the Reception Year with standards below those expected nationally, but, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they have reached or exceeded the levels expected. Attainment is therefore average, but, within this picture, the pupils are demonstrating good progress and their achievement is good overall. This achievement is supported by good teaching and effective teamwork between the teachers and teaching assistants. The teachers plan and deliver successful lessons, supported by the very effective use of ICT and with the positive help of the teaching assistants. At the moment, standards in writing fall below those in reading and mathematics and there have been limited opportunities to promote extended writing.

Because the school has a clear vision for securing its future, has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and shows effective self-evaluation that enables it to prioritise issues for continued improvement, there is a good capacity for sustained improvement. This capacity is enhanced by the school's effective leadership and governance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of writing throughout the school by:
 - providing greater opportunities for extended writing
 - using the wider curriculum to identify areas where writing skills might be enhanced in all learning.
- Promote opportunities to develop a cross-curricular, thematic approach to learning by:
 - maximising the expertise available in each of the partnership schools through collaboration between teachers
 - allowing individual teachers to enhance their professional development by taking responsibility for developing and overseeing identified themes
 - ensuring that effective oversight guarantees full curriculum coverage.
- Build on existing positive links with parents and carers to develop their role as learning partners with the school in promoting the progress of their children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Whatever their starting point, most pupils make good progress. A majority of the pupils start school with standards below those expected, but, by the end of Year 6, they reach or exceed the standards expected nationally. Within this overall picture, writing remains weaker than reading and mathematics. Systems for tracking and monitoring individual pupils' progress are effective and enable all, including those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are seen as needing additional support, to maximise their potential.

The pupils are keen to learn and are enthused by their lessons. Although there are only two classes to cover the whole age range, this does not detract from the pupils' ability to learn effectively. They are self-confident, show good communication skills and demonstrate a clear understanding of the work they have done. Their involvement and

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enthusiasm for learning are illustrated well in the excellent video about school life made by Class 2.

The pupils agree strongly that the school is a safe place, a view shared unanimously by parents and carers and the staff in their questionnaire responses. Within the mixed-age classes and around school, the pupils take very good care of each other, supported by good behaviour and the school's strong moral code. Rooted in its Christian ethos, the school encourages the pupils to develop an understanding of other people's feelings, values and beliefs. The pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and a majority take the opportunity to enjoy physical activity after school, through a good Sports Partnership. Above-average attendance contributes to the development of skills that will support economic well-being, alongside attributes such as being good team players, showing co-operative skills and proficiency in the use of ICT.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The teachers plan their lessons with care and use a variety of styles and activities. Lessons have good pace and interest which motivates the pupils, who respond very positively. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and skill in teaching mixed-age classes. A range of resources, including whiteboards that are used very effectively, add to the interest in lessons and the pupils get very involved, with the result that they enjoy learning and make good progress. The teachers are supported very well by the teaching

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assistants and all the adults work together well to sustain individualised and differentiated activities that enable all pupils to make progress, irrespective of their starting points.

Marking is effective because it helps the pupils know what they have done well and what they can do to improve further. Older pupils enjoy opportunities for self- and peer-assessment and all of this helps them to understand what they have to do in order to reach their challenging targets. Tracking and monitoring procedures are detailed and enable the teachers to keep abreast of the progress of each pupil. They use this information to ensure that all are challenged effectively. As a consequence, those who need additional support are able to do well and sometimes make outstanding progress.

The curriculum is matched well to the needs and aspirations of the pupils. It is supported by a range of enrichment activities which add to the pupils' wider enjoyment of learning and school. A range of clubs are run by the staff and some activities are sustained through effective partnerships. The issue around promoting independent learning identified in the last inspection has been addressed effectively. However, opportunities to develop cross-curricular themes are still in the process of being developed and so opportunities to promote extended writing are not maximised. The teachers are already demonstrating the effectiveness of the new partnership arrangement as all three schools are collaborating in driving forward an initiative in which they will have the chance to develop their organisational skills, by taking ownership of individual projects and seeing them through to fruition.

The care, guidance and support shown to each pupil are outstanding. In large part because the school is so small, there is a strong family feeling in which everyone cares for and supports the others. Because teaching and learning are effectively individualised, everyone is able to succeed. Links with pre-school provision and the secondary schools are good and transition arrangements support the pupils effectively when they transfer. Pupils who may face challenging circumstances are given good support and there are positive links with Dereham Children's Centre, which helps those children settle into the Reception Year effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher provides direction and a clear vision for taking the school forward. In this, she is supported well by the assistant headteacher in Hockering and together they are creating an effective school to which all members of staff are fully committed. The governing body, under the leadership of a very effective chair, have been instrumental in taking the school towards federation and, in so doing, have given it a

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viable future. They are aware of their statutory duties and uphold them well. Safeguarding arrangements are detailed, going beyond the statutory requirements, and early identification supports pupils who may need additional help. However, the provision for promoting community cohesion is still developing. There are some exciting initiatives; the pupils came up with the idea of sponsoring a child in India themselves for example, but this area remains work in progress.

Relations with parents and carers are developing, but some parents and carers are yet to become effective learning partners with the school to support the learning of their children. Wider partnerships, however, are extremely strong, not least in supporting the moves towards federation. Relationships with other professionals support the wider welfare of the pupils effectively. The fact that every pupil is so well known as an individual and their needs provided for means that there is good equality of opportunity and any discrimination is tackled. The clear focus on school improvement, good use of financial and human resources across the partnership and successful outcomes mean that the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Reception Year, where they are in a mixed-age class with pupils from Years 1 and 2. They are supported effectively by the teacher and teaching assistants and have good scope for learning through adult-led and child-initiated learning activities. Facilities, indoors and outdoors, have recently been enhanced and are used effectively to engage the children in learning. Most children start below the expected levels and, despite making satisfactory progress, not all achieve their Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. Recent changes are enabling the children to make faster progress, but this is not yet impacting fully on attainment. The children enjoy school

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and attend regularly. The teacher and teaching assistants work together effectively to provide a well-planned range of activities to promote effective learning so that the children are increasingly achieving as well as they can. Personal, social and emotional development are the weakest areas of the children's early development and so there is a successful focus on helping them to learn and play together. Their progress is monitored carefully and the staff form excellent relationships with the children and their parents and carers, which supports effective development. Leadership and management are good. They are focused on helping the children to make good progress in their learning and development, as well as promoting their safety and welfare effectively.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and of the new school leadership, for example, saying that 'the school has improved immensely. Children seem very happy to be there.' The ethos of the school creates a very positive response and parents and carers feel that their views are taken into account. One commented on the 'positive and caring environment' and the inspection evidence supports these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 inspector received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	36	8	57	1	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	57	6	43	0	0	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)	6	43	7	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	57	5	36	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	71	3	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	86	2	14	0	0	0	0

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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



8 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Dereham, NR20 3HN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited you recently. You go to a good school and your obvious pride and enjoyment in going to it are fully justified.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher lead your school very well and the teachers and teaching assistants know you well. They use this understanding to help you do your best in class and you obviously enjoy school very much. I was impressed by the good behaviour I saw in lessons and around school and the enthusiasm you show for learning. Everyone is able to make progress while at the same time showing care and good support for one another.

In order to make it an even better school I have asked that some developments take place.

The teachers should look for ways in which you can do more topic work and improve your skills in English and mathematics while working on these topics.

You should be helped to improve your skills in writing, because at the moment most of you are better at reading and mathematics.

Your parents and carers should be encouraged to work closely with the school in helping you to achieve your very best by supporting your work at home; a type of learning partnership.

I hope you continue to be so positive about school, because that will help you to succeed and achieve as much as possible. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt

Lead inspector

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