

Helpringham School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120379 |
| Local Authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 358748 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Kirk |

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 | 132 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Geoff Hotchkin |
| Headteacher | Penny Wetton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 October 2007 |
| School address | Highgate Sleaford NG34 0RD |
| Telephone number | 01529 421676 |
| Fax number | 01529 421676 |
| Email address | betty.buckle@helpringham.lincs.sch.uk |

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in school observing learning. They visited eight lessons taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of meetings, policies, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. Questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as from 41 parents and carers.

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

- the quality of learning and progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for the more able
- the assessment of pupil's achievements, including the quality of feedback through marking, in order to support improvements.
- the effectiveness of the school in evaluating their monitoring in order to move the school forward
- how governors use information to challenge and hold the school to account.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and serves Helpringham and its surrounding villages. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a few from other backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average; the majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication problems and moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a separate Reception class. There is a preschool and an aftercare club managed by the governing body and this was part of the inspection. The school has recently achieved the intermediate International Award and the food for Life Bronze Award having already been accredited with the Healthy Schools Award.

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

Helpringham is a good school which has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Attainment is now above average and progress is good. Pupils' personal development is supported effectively by staff who know their individual needs well. Parents are very supportive of the school. Typical comments which exemplified the views of many included, 'We cannot praise this school highly enough. All staff have always been thoroughly helpful and full of encouragement for my children,' and, 'This is a really wonderful school, all the staff know my son by name and we are invited and encouraged to work with the school to the best advantage of our children.'

Teaching is good and an interesting curriculum motivates pupils to want to learn. Children start with skills that are expected for their age. They settle in well, into the Fledglings pre-school provision and then they move smoothly into Reception. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception. Although work is carefully planned and is based on the ongoing assessments of children, activities are often insufficiently challenging enough to secure good progress against learning outcomes. Activities provided are often not stimulating enough to promote good conversation, imaginative play and social interaction. In Key Stages 1 and 2 progress is currently good overall, although historically, it has only been satisfactory in some year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able, make the same progress as other pupils because of good quality support, targeted interventions and carefully planned work at the right level in most lessons. Pupils are supported well to adopt healthy lifestyles by following the rules for healthy eating and by taking part in the wide range of sporting opportunities that the school offers as part of pupils' lessons and after school.

During the inspection, the school held a short but poignant act of Remembrance on the playground and during one assembly, the winning design that would be placed in the centre of the school's Remembrance wreath in the village was announced. The pupils thought this to be of great significance, reflecting their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Attendance, although satisfactory has not been sufficiently high profile in the priorities of the school to secure the necessary improvements.

The good leadership and management, which all teachers contribute to, is central to the improvements that have taken place in recent years. There is a shared vision and morale in the school is high. Good use is made by the school of external government and local authority statistics. The school's own internal tracking, although effective for use by teachers in planning and evaluating the progress of individual pupils, does not enable staff in their leadership and management roles to evaluate whole school strengths and areas for improvement. Governors support the school well, but they are not rigorous enough in challenging the school or holding it to account because they do not have the best quality information to inform them of more detailed strengths and weakness in the school. School

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self-evaluation is generally accurate and all staff have a clear drive and ambition to improve the school even further. Accurate assessments of the quality of teaching and learning enhance the school's good understanding of its effectiveness and all staff are clear about how they can improve their work. These factors all indicate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve tracking so that it can be used as an effective management and analysis tool to support monitoring and evaluation. Ensure that governors hold the school to account and challenge more rigorously by making better use of this data to obtain a view of whole-school performance.
- Improve the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more challenging opportunities for children in the classroom and outdoors, especially in the independent activities provided
 - using assessment information rigorously in planning, to ensure all children make good progress against clear learning outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour all contribute to their good achievement. The school has been particularly successful in improving pupils' progress in mathematics because teachers have high expectations and pupils strive to achieve these. For example in a Year 1 lesson observed, the large majority of pupils by the end of the lesson could double any number up to ten because the learning was highly focussed, challenging and enjoyable. Pupils concentrated hard and were careful when doing their calculations to make sure that their answers were accurate in order to 'win' a pair of number cards. Literacy has improved steadily since the previous inspection, through a strong focus on improving pupils' writing and in Year 6; pupils were encouraged to use their inference and deduction skills by analysing pictures and captions from the book, 'The Mysteries of Harris Burdick'. Their subsequent creative literacy work was supported by a writing frame, which encouraged them to use their all their senses, their imagination and emotions in their discussions and writing. Interventions are targeted to support pupils who struggle with specific aspects of their work and good progress is made by all pupils, regardless of their ability.

Cross curricular links are planned well by teachers to make learning meaningful and enjoyable. Pupils in a Year 2 literacy and design technology lesson, discussed the criteria that would make instructional writing more successful and then continued to make and decorate a Harry Potter hat, using the finished instructions.

Pupils feel safe and say that they would trust adults to deal with any misbehaviour that might occur. They make a good contribution to school life by taking on a wide range of responsibilities, for example selling freshly prepared fruit at playtime. Good links exist between the school and a number of groups in the village, for example elderly residents from the village are invited to lunch and the choir regularly entertain them. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for themselves and others. The school's recent International Award is a testament to the pupils' improved understanding

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

of other cultures, although links with pupils from backgrounds not represented in the immediate community have been more limited.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| 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?

Teaching is good overall. During the inspection teaching ranging from satisfactory to outstanding was observed. Teachers engage pupils well by linking subjects together to show them how important key skills are. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 had recently visited a Victorian school room and workhouse and used historical facts and resources to enhance their journal writing, imagining they were a Victorian child. An improved focus on more able pupils in teacher's planning has ensured that their work is at a suitably challenging level, especially for those recognised as gifted and talented. During main teaching sessions in classes, however, teaching assistants are often not used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that lessons are stimulating and use information and communication technology well to support this. Marking is usually detailed and generally gives good guidance on what pupils can do to improve their work. Staff are in the early stages of incorporating pupils' individual and group targets in writing and mathematics into their marking. However, this work has yet to support pupils' learning effectively.

The good quality curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities, including visiting speakers and trip to places of interest. There is a particularly high take up for the sporting

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opportunities offered by the school and success in local competitions has brought satisfaction, great enjoyment and confidence to many pupils. The after school club offers a range of good activities from the creative arts through to sport and help with homework. Pupils enjoy the club and it is well managed.

The school is committed to providing a good level of care, support and guidance for all pupils. Pupils are cared for sensitively and any pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are monitored carefully and supported well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management responsibilities are shared by all teachers in the school. All take part in monitoring and evaluating the quality of individual subjects and reflecting on the quality of learning for the pupils in order to improve all areas of school life. The headteacher leads the whole team well and ensures that all teachers have the skills, support and ambition to lead new projects and drive improvements. As a result, no ongoing differences exist in the achievement of any particular groups of pupils. Furthermore, the school upholds a strong ethos of equal opportunities, evidenced in many of its extra-curricular opportunities which are made available to all. The school was concerned that there were still some differences in the progress made by some groups of pupils. However, further investigation during the inspection indicated that these pupils made similar progress to their peers and that the school's methods for tracking did not present a sufficiently accurate picture. Governors are supportive of the school and regularly observed its work, but they have not focussed their monitoring on the specific areas under review in the school development plan and as a result have missed opportunities to gain information on the effectiveness of the school's initiatives. In safeguarding, practice was secure and effective at the time of the inspection. However, the organisation of paperwork and the evaluation of safeguarding policies although satisfactory were not sufficiently effective to improve current or future practice.

The school ensures that pupils understand their local community and international links are good. However, outcomes for community cohesion at a national level are more limited and as a result pupils have had few opportunities to mix with people from different religious or cultural backgrounds to themselves resulting in only a limited understanding of values or beliefs that are different to their own.

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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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| 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

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and most pupils reach average standards on entry to Year 1. Induction arrangements and the relationships between children and adults are good and these ensure that children feel safe, settle in quickly and develop their self-confidence. Routines are well established and children are provided with a suitable range of activities covering all areas of learning. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-led tasks and child initiated learning. Children's learning is regularly assessed and recorded in their learning journals, although this information is not used sufficiently rigorously to plan against clear learning outcomes. As a result activities, particularly independent activities, often lack sufficient challenge to enable good progress to be made.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The leader has only just begun work in this newly established role in the school. The quality of entry assessments is improving in its accuracy and there is a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development when analysing the outcomes for when children enter Year 1. Work on evaluating progress from these starting points to use the information to inform leadership and management decisions about provision is in the early stages.

The Fledglings pre-school takes pupils part-time from the age of three. In the Fledglings pre-school, children are encouraged to be independent in organising themselves from the early weeks. Staff take good care of pupils and all requirements for registration are met. A range of enjoyable and varied activities are offered daily, including the use of the newly developed outside area. Outcomes and leadership and management are satisfactory. Work has begun this year, using the age bands to assess pupils on entry and to track their achievements.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | 3 |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents hold very positive views about the school and many who returned questionnaires included written comments praising various aspects of the school including the care of pupils by staff and the good education that the school provides. Parents overwhelmingly agreed that their children enjoyed school and that they are happy with their children's experience at school. A few parents said that their children were not making enough progress. Whilst it could be that this may be the case in a few isolated incidents, inspection findings demonstrate that progress is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Helpringham 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 132 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 33 | 80 | 7 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 30 | 73 | 11 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 19 | 46 | 18 | 44 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 21 | 51 | 15 | 37 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 27 | 66 | 12 | 29 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 18 | 44 | 20 | 49 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 29 | 71 | 11 | 27 | 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) | 24 | 59 | 13 | 32 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 19 | 46 | 15 | 37 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 19 | 46 | 18 | 44 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 16 | 39 | 18 | 44 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 27 | 66 | 12 | 29 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 25 | 61 | 14 | 34 | 1 | 2 | 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 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.



15 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Helpringham School, Sleaford, NG34 0RD

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit to your school. We found you very helpful and you shared your ideas about the school with great enthusiasm.

We think that Helpringham is a good school and we were very impressed with the progress you are making with your work and with the good standards that you reach when you leave the school at the end of Year 6. You are taught well and you clearly enjoy learning, behave well and work hard. The staff look after you well. Everyone in the school cares for each other and the older pupils especially take on a number of important tasks, such as selling freshly prepared fruit to you at playtime. You keep healthy by taking part in lots of sports clubs and teams and you are proactive in reaching out to the local community through your choir performances and invitations to the local elderly people to watch you perform.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are doing a good job and they are determined to make your school even better, so we have asked them to:

- make sure that they track the progress you make really carefully and then do some clever calculations which will help them to evaluate how good learning is across the whole school
- make activities more challenging for the children in Reception so that they learn more.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and taking part in all that your school has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector

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