

Huttoft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120676
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358816
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Barker
Headteacher	Alison Hurrell
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons and seven teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, and members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including policies and arrangements for safeguarding children, the school improvement plan, and a range of evidence on pupils' work over the current year, and detail of their progress and attainment over the past three years and currently. The inspection team spoke with parents and carers and analysed 56 parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective are the school's systems to track pupils' progress, and how well are they and other forms of assessment used in the classroom to promote learning?
- Has the monitoring of teaching and learning by the governing body, leaders and managers led to improvements?
- Have the school's strategies to eliminate weaker performance in mathematics and writing, especially for the more able, been successful?
- What has been the contribution of middle managers to the drive for improvement?

Information about the school

The rural village school is smaller than average. Almost all the pupils are White British. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although more than usual have a statement of special educational needs. The seasonal nature of employment in this part of Lincolnshire means a significant number of pupils start and leave school other than at the usual times. The school has Healthy Schools Status and several other awards for its provision, some at 'gold' level, such as an Activemark for sports and an Artsmark for aesthetic and creative provision. There has been some staff long-term illness since the previous inspection and a number of changes of staff. A new Chair of Governors recently took up her appointment and there are some vacancies on the governing body. After school care, run by the governing body, is offered until 5.30pm on school days. A nursery is on the site. It is run by other providers and not a part of this inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Huttoft Primary is a satisfactory school. Strengths in the aesthetic and creative elements of the curriculum have led to the well-developed personal skills pupils demonstrate throughout the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and children there learn and develop well in a warm, caring environment.

Pupils enthuse about the vibrant and creative themes which make learning fun and the opportunities that have helped them to learn about and contribute well to the local and wider community. An 'Around the World' event formed part of the school's good promotion of community cohesion. The local authority involvement in music, that enables the majority of pupils to learn to play a musical instrument, boosts social and cultural development. This is representative of the good partnerships the school enjoys that promote pupils' learning and well-being. Parents and carers are strongly supportive. 'It's a friendly, happy, welcoming school,' and, 'Our children feel part of a family,' are typical of the comments they made in their questionnaire. The school's engagement with parents and carers is not so effective in relation to pupils' attendance, which is low. This, and difficulties the school has faced in staffing that have affected the consistency of teaching, combine to hold back pupils' progress to satisfactory.

Attainment is average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who join the school or leave at other than the usual times, because these pupils are supported by caring attention to their needs that develops their confidence. Action to improve attainment in mathematics has reaped improvement overall, but too few opportunities are provided for higher numeracy or writing skills to be developed. In consequence, fewer pupils gain the higher National Curriculum levels in mathematics and writing than might reasonably be expected, given their starting points. Teachers sometimes make good use of assessment information so that planning meets individual needs and, in these lessons, pupils make good progress. However, in some lessons, learning activities are not matched well enough to pupils' abilities, teachers' expectations are not high enough and pace is too slow, with pupils expected to sit and listen for too long before embarking on activities. When this happens, more-able pupils, in particular, do not make the progress they should.

New middle managers have undergone training and are beginning to make a useful contribution to the drive for improvement. However, monitoring of teaching and learning by the governing body, leaders and managers does not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make and this is why the gap in developing higher numeracy and writing skills has been missed. In the system for tracking pupils' progress, measurements are too broad and, as a result, finer detail of any underachievement is hidden, preventing prompt remedy. Access to the system is not easily managed because it relies too much on handwritten data. However, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses because all

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staff contribute to school self-evaluation. Although the governing body has not been given enough good quality information in the past by the school about pupils' progress, it is now more informed, through training, about factors that affect pupils' progress, such as staffing, and what information to ask for to enable it to hold the school to account more effectively. Vacancies on the governing body place a burden on existing members, but given the clear grasp that the new Chair of Governors has on her responsibilities, the training undertaken, and the evidence of teamwork, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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?

- Improve attendance to at least the national average by January 2012 by engaging parents and carers more effectively in reducing absence.
- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, so that a large majority of pupils make good progress by January 2012 by:
 - increasing the pace and challenge of lessons to facilitate more active learning
 - ensuring teachers make consistently good use of assessment and tracking data so that tasks are pitched precisely to ability, particularly for the more able
 - maximising the opportunities through themed learning for pupils to develop and use higher level numeracy and literacy skills.
- Improve the management of teaching and learning by:
 - using information and communication technology to record tracking data so that it is more accessible to staff
 - measuring progress in smaller steps so that underachievement is quickly spotted, followed up and remedied
 - focusing monitoring activity more securely on how much progress pupils are making
 - improving the quality, frequency, detail and evaluation of the information on pupils' progress supplied by the school to the governing body.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - taking all possible steps to secure a settled and stable teaching staff and a full governing body
 - enhancing the governing body's understanding of school data so it can monitor the work of the school and hold managers to account more effectively
 - sharpening the focus of the governing body's monitoring to check on the work of the school and challenge leaders over the progress pupils make.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

When they start school, children's skills and understanding are in line with those expected for their ages. Pupils leave Year 6 with average attainment in English and mathematics.

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Achievement is therefore satisfactory overall, although inspection evidence agrees with the school's view that progress has been slower for those groups that have undergone frequent changes of teacher. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equivalent progress to their peers because all the adults provide caring support.

In some lessons seen, progress was good. In lessons in Years 4 and 6 which were part of the design and technology themed week, pupils made good progress in their numeracy because work was well-matched to their abilities. This is not always the case. For instance, the groups focusing on literacy during the themed work made little progress because the tasks were too easy. Scrutiny of pupils' numeracy and literacy work completed over the past six months shows inconsistent but mostly satisfactory progress. In numeracy, challenging investigative work is too infrequent to push pupils to make the progress necessary to reach the higher levels.

Pupils enjoy learning and their behaviour is good. This helps them to make progress in lessons where teaching is good as they show good attitudes to their work and want to do well. Pupils say that they feel exceptionally safe because adults look after them well. They have a detailed understanding of how to stay safe in a range of situations such as on the internet, on the road, in case of fire and in water because the high-quality personal and social programme gives them strategies to keep themselves safe and these are very well understood. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school. They are certain that, if necessary, they could turn to any adult in the school for help. Pupils are entirely confident that they are listened to and the warm and caring ethos in the school gives them a sense of security that they value highly. 100% of the response to the parents and carers' questionnaire agreed that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make in school, taking on a range of individual responsibilities, but these lack a focal point for views to be heard by staff or the governing body because no formal pupil group exists. Pupils are involved in charitable activities and have strong links with the local community. Their regular reading in church, singing in local rest homes, instrumental concerts in the locality, contribution to local flower festivals and help with harvest-giving confirm the strength of their contribution in the area. They show good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and are proud of the schools health-related achievements such as Healthy Schools Status and Activemark Gold. Pupils spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is well supported by the wide range of activities for music and dance that have led to the school's Artsmark Gold award. Their appreciation of the ethnic diversity that makes up the United Kingdom today is more limited.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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 curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection and the use of creative themes enhances pupils' enjoyment. The coverage of different subjects is balanced overall, and literacy and numeracy are promoted through a range of subject areas. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop creative and higher level writing skills. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a strong programme of personal, social and health education that does much to equip pupils with the tools to feel safe, and a good range of out-of-school activities and visits covering sports and the arts. Music is a particular strength.

There are inconsistencies of teaching. Improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children are now making good progress there. The use of the interactive whiteboard regularly provides good visual support for learning and a focus for the lesson. Teaching in Year 5 is consistently good and, in Year 6, mostly good, pulling pupils' progress up from a dip when staff changes and absence affected their progress in previous years. While most lessons are well planned and show that teachers provide a range of learning activities for their pupils depending on their abilities, this is not always the case. Teaching assistants are used well to support learning for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there are missed opportunities throughout the school to extend the learning of more-able pupils.

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The school has worked successfully with a few families to increase attendance rates, but this has not eliminated low attendance in the school as a whole. Pastoral care is good and all pupils are cared for well. There are good systems to ensure pupils who may need extra support, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well cared for to ensure that they make equivalent progress to their classmates. The school keeps satisfactory statutory records. The after-school care facility ensures a well-supported end to the day for those children involved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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?

Leaders and managers have had an adequate impact on pupils' learning since the previous inspection. Plans in place deal appropriately with key priorities; for example, the plan for improving mathematics is reviewed regularly to assess its impact. Leaders are taking effective steps to improve the quality of teaching and this has had significant impact on improving progress and attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in beginning to redress identified shortfalls at other stages. Newer leaders are taking on roles with enthusiasm and already have a good grasp of their subjects and plans for improvement. The governing body appreciates the challenges faced by the school and, following recent training, it is now well informed about its responsibilities. However, its monitoring skills are restricted by sometimes incomplete information provided by the school.

The school adequately promotes equality of opportunity and tackles all discrimination. In spite of regular information and meetings provided for parents and carers, there are still a number of families who do not engage fully with the school in support of their children's attendance. More successful are the partnerships which underpin many aspects of the school's work. The school's tracking system has improved since the previous inspection but it still is not sharp enough in promptly identifying any shortfall in individual pupils' progress. The school's safeguarding policies and practices are effective and implemented well. The school has a good understanding of the social, ethnic and religious community it serves. Within the school, the promotion of community cohesion is strong. However, the school's work to increase pupils' understanding of the diversity of different communities is not as well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class is a haven of happy learning where children develop well because the leadership of the teacher-coordinator is competent, knowledgeable and caring. It is because of the good teaching that children make good progress in nearly all areas of learning so that they leave this key stage with levels of skills and understanding that are above average. Significant progress is made in communication, language and literacy skills because staff provide children with many opportunities to develop these basic skills and explore the world around them. Some children can already count in twos and fully understand the concept of 'one more' and 'one less'. There is a strong emphasis on the development of children's social skills and they learn to play and work happily together, taking turns and working independently. The learning areas are bright, welcoming and well equipped, including the outdoor area. Children enjoy their learning as there are many opportunities for them to work independently and in groups, with adults on hand to offer guidance and support. Children are looked after well and supported by good safeguarding procedures with well-implemented policies. The work is well planned and shared well with parents and carers, who as a result are supportive. Regular observations of what children have achieved help staff to check on their progress and plan effectively for their next stage of learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Most parents and carers are very supportive of all the school offers and reflected high levels of satisfaction in the school's work across most areas. All the respondents feel their child enjoys school and that school keeps their child safe and helps them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Few parents and carers expressed any concern, and no particular pattern emerged. A very few parents and carers felt the school does not meet their child's needs. Written comments suggested that this was because progress was not as much as expected. The inspection team found progress through the school is inconsistent but satisfactory overall, with the best progress seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Huttoft 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 inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	82	10	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	71	14	25	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	61	20	36	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	70	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	71	15	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	73	15	27	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)	35	63	19	34	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	68	14	25	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	61	21	38	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	66	17	30	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	75	12	21	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	84	8	14	1	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huttoft Primary School, Alford, LN13 9RE

Thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and I am writing to tell you what we found out. You go to a school that continues to provide you with a satisfactory education. This means that some things are fine but others could be better. Here are some of the things we found out.

You told us that the adults in your school look after you well.

You told us that you really enjoy the themed learning, such as the design and technology work going on during the inspection, because it makes learning interesting.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress as they are well taught and good provision is made for them.

Your behaviour is good.

We have asked the school to do some important things to help it improve even further.

Improve teaching so that you make faster progress and reach higher standards, especially those who find learning easy.

Ensure that your attendance improves to the average for other schools nationally.

We have also asked your school's leaders to make sure they provide the governing body with clear information about your progress. We would like to see the governing body and those teachers who have responsibilities for managing the school streamline their checking systems and make sure these things are improving.

All of you can help by coming to school every day of the term, and continuing to behave well and try hard.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead inspector

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