

Histon and Impington Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110752
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356806
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Barton
Headteacher	Sharon Honig (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons and saw nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and a representative of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information about their attainment and progress, evidence of monitoring and self-evaluation, and documents indicating how well the school safeguards its pupils. They analysed 110 parental questionnaire returns and 12 responses from members of staff.

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

- Inspectors explored whether the school is taking effective action to ensure all groups of pupils make equally good progress.
- They looked at how effectively teachers communicate to pupils how well they are doing and how they might improve their work.
- They considered the extent to which leaders new in post are rigorously monitoring performance and driving school improvement.
- They examined how well children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the main factors in this.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average infant school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Until very recently, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs has been above average. The closure two weeks before the inspection of a specially resourced provision for special educational needs has led to a reduction in the proportion of pupils with a statement, which is now average. The school has National Healthy Schools status.

There have been significant staff changes over the past year, with four retirements, including that of the previous headteacher. An acting headteacher has been in post since September 2010 and a permanent headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2011. A new deputy headteacher joined the school at the beginning of this term.

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

3

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and enjoy learning. The school has many strengths and the governing body and senior leaders are committed to making provision as good as possible for the pupils. During the many recent changes, the acting headteacher has been successful in keeping the school stable and ensuring that it runs smoothly from day to day. Through her energy and enthusiasm, and particularly her good leadership of teaching and learning, she is building on the school's existing strengths and laying the foundations for future development. The governing body provides good strategic leadership, has a clear vision for the school and knows what needs to be done to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been good but the fact that the school is going through a period of transition means that its capacity to improve is currently satisfactory. This is because a number of staff in key positions are new or have taken on different responsibilities so that they are still developing the leadership skills needed to fulfil some aspects of their roles.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved over the last three years and is above average. In 2010, the percentage of pupils who reached the higher levels was above average in mathematics, reading and science, and broadly average in writing. Girls outperformed girls nationally, whereas boys' attainment was just above the national average for boys. Efforts to raise the attainment of boys, particularly in writing, are proving effective and the school has almost completely closed the gap between their attainment and that of girls. From their broadly average starting points, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language, and who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. Pupils are performing in line with their challenging targets and more pupils are predicted to reach higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics this year than in 2010.

Throughout the school, careful supervision and high-quality relationships contribute to pupils' good academic progress and personal development, good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. The curriculum provides many exciting and memorable experiences. At the time of the inspection, vibrant displays from the recent topic on 'India' showed how learning is brought to life by focusing on real contexts. Teaching is good and there are many strengths, consistently applied, in the way teachers promote pupils' learning and progress. However, in planning their lessons and interpreting curriculum plans, teachers do not always make full use of what they know about the prior attainment of groups and individuals. This means that some of the activities are not challenging enough for more-able pupils or geared sufficiently to the next steps in learning for those who are less able.

Engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory. Their views are surveyed annually, they receive regular information about school events, twice yearly consultations and

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detailed annual reports. However, the high level of parental interest, evident in the many who act as volunteers in the school, is not used to full effect. For example, they are not kept as closely informed about how well their children are doing as they could be or about how to support learning at home. The governing body has, rightly, identified the need to improve communication with, and the involvement of, parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the way teachers throughout the school use their knowledge about pupils' prior attainment to plan activities in lessons that target the next steps in learning for different groups of pupils.
- Improve the engagement of parents and carers by:
 - ensuring that in the Reception classes they have continuous access to their children's progress records and are given more opportunities to contribute to them
 - providing more detailed guidance about how they could support their children's learning at home
 - increasing ongoing communication between home and school, especially about their children's progress
 - introducing a wider range of strategies for gathering and using their views in school improvement
 - extending the use of parents' and carers' expertise to support curriculum activities.
- In order to accelerate the rate of school improvement, develop the leadership roles of staff who have recently been appointed or who have taken on new responsibilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils say that they 'really like school' and 'learn lots'. They enjoy learning, attend regularly and are keen to do well. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils relished the opportunity to work on a series of challenges where they had only three minutes to complete each one. In all lessons observed, they eagerly answered teachers' questions and concentrated well when working together or independently. Pupils' behaviour, which is good overall and sometimes outstanding, contributes significantly to their good progress. The way in which subjects are linked together, with English in particular being taught alongside humanities and creative subjects, is helping to raise pupils' achievement. The teaching of basic skills through large-scale projects that capture pupils' imagination has increased the motivation of boys so that they work hard in lessons. It has also helped to raise achievement in a number of subjects, so that pupils' attainment is above expectations not only in English, mathematics and science. Displays around the school show that pupils make outstanding progress and reach high standards in art and design, where they produce impressive work in two and three dimensions. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, particularly in reading and in sequencing their ideas for writing, because they are well supported and benefit from extra help provided by volunteers.

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Pupils are aware of the need for physical activity and are very well informed about which foods are healthy. They make a good contribution as members of the school council and all take on responsibilities around the school, which they carry out with pride. They take part in local events and collect money for children in Botswana. Pupils have exciting opportunities to learn about other cultures and speak with enthusiasm about the recent 'India' project. The school prepares them well for the next stage of their education. They acquire good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills and apply these well in a range of contexts. Pupils in Year 1 had an excellent opportunity to gain enterprise skills by making bags from old jeans as part of a recycling project.

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	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 school has reorganised the curriculum since the last inspection to provide more in-depth experiences that span a number of subjects. This is contributing well to pupils' achievement and a great deal to their enjoyment. As well as large topics, the whole school participates in themed days or weeks. These bring variety to pupils' learning through working with visitors such as a professional storyteller, an African dance and drumming group and a Bhavan dance troop. For an infant school, an unusually varied range of clubs promotes pupils' social skills and extends their learning. The staff ensure that pupils receive good care, guidance and support, so that they are happy at school and feel safe. Specialist support from outside agencies and therapists is used well in supporting pupils

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whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Good partnerships with the nearby early years centre and with the junior school support children when they join the school and move on at the end of Year 2.

Most of the teaching is at least good and a number of strengths are consistently found in lessons throughout the school. Teachers structure their lessons well and provide varied activities. Their skilled questioning probes pupils' understanding and challenges them to explain their thinking. Teachers have good classroom management skills and are successful in engaging pupils' interest. Information and communication technology is used to good effect to stimulate learning. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in improving marking and informing pupils about the next steps in their learning. A number of these strengths came together in an outstanding lesson in Year 2 where pupils were writing about the Battle of Bosworth. The teacher provided a range of colourful examples of the different sights, sounds and smells of a battleground. As the lesson proceeded, by getting pupils to evaluate an existing piece of work, the teacher extended their knowledge of how to move forward with their own writing. There are other exemplary features to teaching and learning, for instance, the imaginative way in which the 'sewing room' has been set up in the corridor, but not all teachers interpret curriculum planning as well as they could. In less successful lessons, teachers focus too much on the topic rather than matching work closely to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils.

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?

The acting headteacher, together with the newly appointed deputy headteacher, is working closely with the local authority to sustain and build on the school's existing strengths. In recent months, there has been a substantial amount of lesson observation by the acting headteacher, whose monitoring of teaching and learning is accurate. The establishment of an expanded senior leadership team is helping to support development priorities. Not all staff in key roles have had time to develop these, however, and it is too early to see the impact of their actions on self-evaluation and school improvement. The governing body works closely with school leaders to provide strategic direction and evaluate the school's effectiveness. As part of a programme of regular visits, its members produce highly-detailed reports about aspects of the school's work. Governance is helping to provide continuity of leadership during this period of change and the Chair of the Governing Body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and of areas that could be improved. Members have already begun to consider how best to engage parents and carers more closely in school development. The governing body fulfils its duties

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effectively in ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Record-keeping is of high quality, and staff are well trained and have a good knowledge of how to protect pupils. The school liaises well with other agencies and parents and carers in supporting pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well. Regular checks on pupils' progress by senior leaders ensure that any emerging underachievement is identified and acted upon, as in the case of a previous gap between the attainment of boys and girls. Community cohesion is good. The school is a very harmonious community and there are good local and global links. The school has conducted a thorough audit of its context and correctly identified the need to develop national links and integrate these into curriculum planning.

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	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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress overall in the Reception classes, and in 2010 their attainment exceeded national expectations. There are good links with pre-school settings and children settle in well. Classrooms provide a good level of stimulation and children have plenty of opportunity to work and play indoors or in the developing outside area. Teaching is good when adults work with small groups of children because they relate well to them, ask probing questions that prompt them to think deeply and talk in detail about their ideas. This was evident where teachers worked with groups of children to promote their writing skills and where teaching assistants encouraged children to explore materials in the outdoor 'investigation' area. These sessions promote children's language and communication and personal, social and emotional development well. Staff meet regularly to plan the curriculum and discuss children's interests. They regularly observe their learning and keep thorough records of their progress, but they do not always make full

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use of what they know about children's prior attainment in planning. As a result, some of the activities do not offer enough challenge or stimulation. Parents and carers receive helpful information about the topics being taught and are encouraged to share the high points of what their children have achieved at home. They find out about their children's progress through meetings with staff but do not have ongoing access to their children's learning records or the opportunity to contribute regularly to them. Nevertheless, children are happy, concentrate for long periods and clearly enjoy learning. They are well cared for and receive a good level of adult support. The acting headteacher has begun to work with the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and has an in-depth understanding of how to improve provision.

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

In addition to completing the parental questionnaire, many parents and carers wrote expressing their detailed views about the school. A very large majority say that their children are happy at school and believe that they are well cared for and kept safe. A large majority praise many other aspects of the school and are exceptionally pleased with the way it promotes their children's learning. However, a small minority express concerns, particularly in relation to how the school is led by the staff and governors, how it communicates with them, the progress their children are making and the way behaviour is managed. Inspectors explored these areas and found that, overall, leadership is satisfactory and that the acting headteacher is doing a good job during this period of change. Pupils make good progress in most lessons. Inspectors endorse the views of some parents and carers that staff and the governing body could do more to communicate with them, and the school is looking to improve this. Inspection findings indicate that behaviour, a concern of a few respondents, is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Histon and Impington Infant 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	65	33	30	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	59	40	36	4	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	24	66	60	14	13	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	33	58	53	10	9	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	53	48	50	45	2	2	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	43	50	45	8	7	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	34	64	58	5	5	1	1
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)	36	33	44	40	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	36	54	49	5	5	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	29	61	55	9	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	27	60	55	7	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	23	21	59	54	16	15	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	50	45	41	4	4	3	3

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.



9 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Histon and Impington Infant School, Cambridge, CB24 9LL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent talking to you, visiting your lessons, looking at your work and seeing all the exciting things you do. You told us a lot about the school and this has helped in writing the report.

We found that you go to a good school and you told us that you 'really like school' and 'learn lots'. Everyone gets on well with one another and you behave well. This helps you to learn because you concentrate very well in lessons and try hard. You are making good progress. We were particularly impressed by your beautiful artwork and the exciting things you have been doing in the project about India. The staff make sure you are well cared for and you told us that you feel safe and always have someone you can talk to if you are worried.

Although there have been a lot of changes in the last few months, the acting headteacher is working well with the staff and governing body to make the school exciting for you. So that you make even better progress, we have asked your school to:

- make sure that work in lessons is always at the right level for everyone, whether you find learning easy or difficult
- work closely with your parents and carers and involve them even more in the life of the school
- make sure that all the staff who have important responsibilities know how to help the school to improve.

You can help by continuing to do your best and always letting teachers know if work is too difficult or too easy for you. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild

Lead inspector

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