

# Little Houghton Church of England Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122025
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359149
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Campbell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	93
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Browett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patricia George
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lodge Close Lodge Road, Northampton NN7 1AF
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<b>Email address</b>	head@lt-houghton.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed five teachers and eight lessons. Four lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the governing body, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke informally to parents and carers. Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a wide range of documentation including information about pupil's progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. They looked at pupils' current and past work and scrutinised 52 questionnaires completed by pupils and 59 by parents and carers.

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

- The progress made by different groups of pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The degree to which assessment information is used to match pupils' future work to their needs and abilities and whether information and communication technology is a sufficiently integral part of learning.
- The effectiveness of the leadership in ensuring consistently good teaching.
- The effectiveness of the restructured subject leadership in identifying priorities and driving through improvement.

## Information about the school

Little Houghton is a smaller-than-average sized school located in a village on the outskirts of the town. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs varies from year to year and is currently above average. The school has recently gained Healthy Schools status and has received many awards, including Geographymark, in recognition of its work. A privately run playgroup operates from the school site. It is not managed by the governing body and was not included in the 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

Little Houghton is a satisfactory and improving school. The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a notable strength. The school's good care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to pupils' good personal and social development. Effective partnerships with other schools greatly enhance pupils' learning. Most parents and carers have very positive views about the school. As one parent commented, 'I could not have asked for a better education for my child. She has flourished in all areas'.

This is a happy school with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. It is a place where staff and pupils feel valued. There is a powerful sense of community and pupils enjoy school a great deal. The headteacher and senior teacher complement each other's skills well. They have successfully created a good climate for learning and are the major driving force behind improvement. All staff work closely together and share the same ambitions for moving the school forward.

Pupils make satisfactory progress, after a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and typically reach above average standards by the time they leave. There is strong evidence in pupils' current work to show that standards are continuing to rise and that the proportion of higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, is increasing. Well-targeted initiatives, such as those to encourage greater enthusiasm in boys for reading, have had a positive impact on their attainment. This has been a real success story. The school is now turning its attention towards raising boys' attainment in writing, using the same methods to develop greater confidence in written work. In the recent past, standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 have not been as good as in other subjects and the school is starting to raise the profile of the subject in order to secure improvement. However, not enough younger pupils currently reach higher levels. The introduction of more effective assessment procedures now identifies potential underachievement much earlier. This enables pupils to receive well-targeted support quickly in order to get them back on track. Although further work remains to be done, the picture is positive.

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, but is not yet consistent enough to ensure good learning and progress throughout the school. Parents and carers rightly believe that teachers make lessons interesting. However, occasionally, in teachers' quest to make activities exciting and relevant, the focus on what pupils are learning gets lost and there is not always enough challenge for higher-attaining pupils. When assessing pupils' learning, marking is not always used effectively enough to show pupils the next step forward. The curriculum has a richness and diversity that motivates pupils well. They value the opportunities on offer, particularly those that develop healthy lifestyles. Pupils' care and welfare are given a high priority. The school caters very well for pupils from families whose circumstances sometimes make them hard to reach.

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The school's leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to identify the right priorities for moving the school forward. However, self-evaluation is sometimes too optimistic, particularly about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This is because it tends to be based more on pupils' good personal outcomes, rather than on their satisfactory academic progress. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school satisfactorily, although not always with enough precision. The governing body has high levels of commitment and involvement, but it does not always have enough first-hand information to hold the school to account for standards achieved. Taking all the above points into account, particularly the rise in standards of boys' reading and the improvements brought about by tighter tracking of progress, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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?**

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching
  - ensuring lesson activities provide enough challenge, especially for higher-attaining pupils
  - focusing with greater precision on the day-to-day quality of learning of individual pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Raise standards in boys' writing throughout the school by:
  - extending the range of opportunities within the curriculum themes that are specifically designed to engage boys' interest, as well as girls'
  - using marking more effectively to let pupils know how well they are doing and to move them on to the next step
  - involving pupils more in assessing their own levels of understanding.
- Strengthen the monitoring role of leaders and the governing body by:
  - ensuring monitoring focuses with greater precision on measuring the success of initiatives by their impact on pupils' learning outcomes.

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

**3**

Most children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly at levels expected of children at this age. Through good teaching, they move into Year 1 with a higher than expected proportion having exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Recently introduced strategies to focus on the development of early reading and writing skills right from the start now provide secure foundations for future development. In Key Stages 1 and 2, because teachers are starting to use assessment information with greater precision than in the past, they have a far more accurate view of whether pupils are making enough

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progress. Although there is still more work to be done, this tighter focus has led to a sustained upward trend in standards because higher-attainers, in particular, receive a greater level of challenge. The progress of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities, although satisfactory overall, is often good in group activities. At these times, the work these pupils receive is more accurately focused on their individual needs. Progress is at its best in lessons where the teachers move learning on at a good pace and the level of challenge is high. A good example of this was seen in a successful lesson in the Reception class, where children were learning about money. Boys and girls of all abilities were equally challenged by the activities. Higher-attaining children, in particular, made good gains in their knowledge by coming up with a wealth of interesting ways to make 15p using 1p and 2p coins. The whole session was very rewarding because children were animated and excited and the class teacher never gave up in her quest to ensure that individual children enjoyed success.

Pupils of all ages greatly appreciate the opportunities on offer. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils are courteous, polite and considerate. In discussion, they display a good understanding of how to keep safe. They are particularly proud of their school garden project and take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. The high participation in good quality extra-curricular clubs successfully promotes a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' strong contribution to the school and wider community is demonstrated well by the involvement of the school council in numerous activities, such as the recent initiative to raise funds for an outdoor clock. Residential visits to places such as the Isle of Wight develop pupils' social skills very effectively. A strong ethos successfully underpins good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Music is an important part of their cultural growth. Parents and carers rightly judge pupils' good academic and personal skills prepare them well for their future lives. By the time pupils leave, most have developed a mature, confident approach towards their work. Attendance, although broadly average, is not as high as at the time of the previous inspection because a small minority of pupils are taken out in term-time for holidays.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teachers and support staff work very closely together. They know their pupils well and relationships are strong. There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to make as much progress as others. Where teaching is at its best, staff have high expectations of work and behaviour. However, the picture is not entirely consistent. In some lessons, the pace of learning is not brisk enough and occasionally, there are missed opportunities to move higher-attaining pupils on to even greater challenge. Day-to-day assessment is used well in some classes. In others, it does not build sufficiently on pupils' past knowledge and sometimes does not ensure pupils know whether they are making enough progress.

The recently restructured 'themed curriculum' motivates pupils of all ages and abilities well. Special events, such as 'India Week', successfully bring the curriculum alive by combining learning across a range of subjects. Partnerships with schools within the Ashby Cluster are particularly effective in adding greater breadth to the curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology, although in the process of development, has improved since the previous inspection and is now a more integral part of learning. A good range of educational visits consolidates learning well and adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment. A strong personal, social and health education programme makes a positive contribution towards pupils' good personal development. There is still further to go before

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the new curriculum is embedded firmly enough to have a measurable impact on pupils' achievement.

This school is a very supportive community where older pupils care about younger ones, successfully developing strong bonds of friendship. Parents and carers are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after. The school works closely with outside agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, enabling them to participate fully in school life. Good quality transfer arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior teacher have effectively developed a very inclusive approach towards leadership and management. Staff are strongly supportive because they have a valued voice in decision making. There is a real sense of ownership among staff. The restructured subject leadership team plays a key role in identifying priorities and there is a shared commitment towards driving through improvement. Strategic planning accurately identifies areas in most need and is increasingly underpinned by better analysis of data about pupils' achievement. Monitoring and evaluation are purposeful, though sometimes lacking in precision, particularly when measuring the impact of initiatives on learning.

The governing body is well organised and it oversees areas such as safeguarding and community cohesion well. Safeguarding procedures are very secure, meet requirements and follow good practice. The single central record, in particular, is well maintained. In many respects the school is a highly inclusive community but the fact that, for example, some younger higher-attaining pupils do not achieve standards in line with their ability in mathematics means that equality of opportunity is satisfactory rather than good. The school tackles discrimination well. Pupils throughout the school are particularly appreciative of each other's success and show great care and consideration towards those who sometimes find learning hard. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It is strong at a local level, through good links within the parish. Pupils are also well informed and gain good insights into diverse cultures at a global level through their charitable works and long-standing links with India. Links at a national level are in the pipeline, but are currently not as well developed.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Parents are rightly appreciative of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are successfully encouraged to become involved in their child's education right from the start. All staff know families and individual children's needs very well and this enables children to flourish within a warm, nurturing environment where they feel secure. They know they are part of a very caring community. Activities are fun and children are provided with good opportunities to explore indoors and outside. Independence is promoted well because the balance between adult-led and independent activities is just right. Children gain a good early understanding of eating healthily and keeping fit. Teaching is always of high quality, ensuring children of all abilities make good progress. There is a real commitment to challenge in group activities. This high expectation is the major reason why children move into Year 1 with above expected levels of knowledge and understanding for children this age. Occasionally, some free choice activities, although purposeful, do not provide enough challenge to promote good learning. The job share arrangement works very well because the two teachers work impressively well together. Children's 'My Treasure' books are of high quality and give clear insight into the progress of individuals. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because all staff share the same clear vision for future development and a strong commitment towards securing improvement.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 have positive views about the school. They particularly like their children's enjoyment of school and the fact that they feel safe. They believe the school is well led and managed. They are unanimous in their view that their children are taught well.

However, over a third of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed concerns about how well the school listens and whether it takes sufficient account of their views. They felt communication at a personal level could be better. The lead inspector looked into the concerns raised and followed up all written and verbal comments. She spoke with key staff and held informal discussions with a cross-section of parents and carers. The school recognises that there have been isolated incidents relating to, for example, parents taking pupils out of school in term time, as well as discussion with a small minority of parents and carers about behavioural concerns. The headteacher is reviewing the way in which the school deals with such incidents and is looking into ways of working more closely with parents and carers to resolve their current concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Houghton Church of England Primary 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	75	11	19	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	73	15	25	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	41	28	47	7	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	36	31	53	7	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	39	36	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	44	25	42	8	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	47	30	51	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)	27	46	28	47	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	37	32	54	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	37	29	49	8	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	39	16	27	17	29	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	23	39	33	56	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	51	27	46	2	3	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

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

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



25 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Little Houghton Church of England Primary School, Northampton NN7 1AF**

Thank you for looking after us so well when we visited your school. There are many things of which you should be really proud. You try hard to eat healthily and keep fit. You get on well with the grown-ups who teach you and look after you and you enjoy working and playing together. We liked talking with some of you about your work. We really liked looking at all the topics you have done this year.

You go to a satisfactory school that is improving all the time. You enjoy school very much because it is a happy, friendly place and your teachers try to make the work you do interesting and exciting. You told us that you enjoyed your 'India Week' when you tried lots of different kinds of food. When I visited your assembly, I thought your singing was really good.

However, not everyone makes as much progress as they should, particularly those of you who are good at numeracy in Key Stage 1. I have asked those in charge to help you by giving you harder work. I want to make sure you know how to improve your work and that you have enough time to practise your skills when you do your topic work. The boys are getting much better at writing but some of you still need more help to be really good. I want you to enjoy the work that you do so that you want to write more. Your headteacher and governors are going to check more carefully on whether all of you are making enough progress.

You can help your teachers by coming to school every day on time, listening to your teachers and making sure you always try to do your best.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell

Lead Inspector

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