

Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124702
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359751
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Liz Jump
Headteacher	Brenda Burridge
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed five teachers teaching five lessons, and a range of other adult-led activities. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff, and inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the schools' tracking of pupils' progress, pupils' books and displays of work. They examined the school's plans for improvement, teachers' planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for ensuring pupils' safety. They also analysed 67 parental questionnaires and questionnaires completed by pupils in Key Stage 2 and staff.

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

- How much progress do pupils in Key Stage 2, including those who join the school other than at the usual time of entry, make from their starting points?
- What impact do the school's procedures for the induction of pupils who join during the school year have on pupils' well-being and learning?
- To what extent do teachers involve pupils in setting targets and evaluating their own work?

Information about the school

This small primary school serves pupils from local villages and the Royal Air Force base at Honington. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the beginning of Reception or leave before the end of Year 4 is much higher than in most schools. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than in the majority of schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also lower than average. The governing body provides a Mother and Toddler group which is held in the school hall one afternoon a week. The school has National Healthy Schools Status, the Physical Education and Sports Strategy Activemark and the Investors in People 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

This is a good school, where enthusiastic and committed leaders and staff strive to provide the best possible education and care. As a result, teaching is almost always good, and sometimes outstanding, enabling all groups of pupils to make good progress. Plans for development now include how the outcomes will be measured, the lack of which was an issue for improvement from the last inspection. Regular monitoring of individual pupils' progress generates challenging targets and enables effective additional support to be provided when necessary. Observations of teaching and learning in lessons accurately measure teachers' skills and inform whole-school plans for improvement. However, points for improvement are not followed up in future observations, resulting in missed opportunities to help teachers improve their skills further. The governing body is fully involved in school development and is increasingly monitoring the work of the school. All teachers have additional areas of responsibility and a good understanding of the school's priorities based on the school's accurate self-assessment. As a result, the school's potential for future improvement is good.

The good teaching and interesting curriculum make learning effective and enjoyable. Children generally join the Reception class with higher than average knowledge and skills for their age. Standards have been consistently high by the end of Key Stage 1 over the last three years. By Year 4, over half the pupils are working at much higher levels than expected for their age in English, although their mathematical skills, while above average, are not so high. This is because there is insufficient challenge for a few pupils, who consistently get all their work correct. Pupils who join other than at the usual time are made welcome and settle into school routines rapidly. Informal but effective systems for ensuring these pupils are working at the correct levels mean that any disruption to their learning is minimised. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their targets because they receive well-structured support. All pupils know their targets and work hard to achieve them. However, teachers do not make the most of pupils' responsible attitudes to their work by involving them in deciding for themselves what they need to do to improve. Similarly, although they enjoy their 'topics', they have little choice of what they learn about as they acquire the skills they need.

The school takes good care of the pupils. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what is acceptable and the behaviour of almost all is exemplary. The good personal, social and health education curriculum, including the recently introduced philosophy sessions, are giving pupils a good foundation for their future lives.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to take more responsibility for their learning by:

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- engaging them in setting their own targets, based on a thorough understanding of their performance and what they need to do to attain the next level
- allowing them to have some say in the content of the curriculum to reflect their interests and aspirations.
- Sharpen the monitoring of teaching to focus on points for improvement from previous observations as well as whole-school initiatives.
- Provide more challenge for the pupils in Key Stage 2 who consistently produce faultless work in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy their learning. In lessons they listen attentively and most are eager to contribute to class discussions and to answer questions. In one lesson, for example, while exploring the different sounds the 'a' can make, there was a lively debate about its use in the words 'wear' and 'ear'. Such was the knowledge of these Year 2 pupils that they instantly remarked that the 'a' in the word 'ear' is part of the 'e' phoneme. Pupils' outstanding behaviour in lessons and the excellent relationships with their teachers enable them to build on their above average skills on entry to attain high standards, especially in reading and writing. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum, and their studies in history, geography and science often form the theme of their literacy lessons. This prepares them well for their future learning. A concert of spring songs, rehearsed and performed during the inspection, showed the pupils' tuneful and lively singing prowess very effectively.

The harmonious ethos of the school, where all are respected and valued, helps pupils feel very safe in school. They know they can confide in adults. Most pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy, reinforced by visitors such as the dentist. The majority participate in the many additional sporting activities, and older pupils swim regularly, using the air force base pool. They make a good contribution to school life, carrying out their duties responsibly. Older pupils have been trained as play leaders. The school is at the heart of the community and pupils have frequent opportunities to enhance the life of the village. For example, they collect harvest gifts for the elderly. However, almost all initiatives are generated and led by adults, missing opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills to the full. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through their studies, but their knowledge of the diversity and richness of British society 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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
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?

Teachers and teaching assistants respect pupils' views and have high expectations of their attitudes to their work. Teachers' planning, based on a good understanding of individual needs, is firmly rooted in extending the skills of pupils of all abilities. Teaching assistants are deployed to provide good additional support and to facilitate learning in smaller groups. The few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have good support, enabling them to make good progress towards their academic targets. Occasionally, however, additional adults are not effectively engaged during whole-class sessions. Teachers have good subject knowledge and encourage pupils to apply their skills to produce, for example, impressive extended writing. Very occasionally, the mathematics tasks asked of a few pupils do not extend their skills swiftly enough and they spend too long repeating work they have already mastered. Wise oral and written advice ensures pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils occasionally evaluate their own performance or that of their peers during lessons. This is not extended to enabling pupils to set their own targets for improvement.

The curriculum is well planned to enable pupils to progressively acquire new skills across all subjects. There is a good balance of subjects and the school makes good use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' learning. For example, a member of staff from Thurston Community College supported the school's science week. Pupils visit a range of local places of interest as diverse as an Anglo-Saxon Village, Knettishall Heath, Saint

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Edmundsbury Cathedral and the Imperial War Museum. The local sports partnership provides support for physical education and an impressive range of sporting clubs. However, at present all additional activities are sports based and there are no extra-curricular activities for pupils who would prefer different opportunities.

Pupils are cared for well in school. The good personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils acquire the skills they need to become mature and responsible citizens. Any pupils who have specific personal or social challenges are nurtured and supported well. As a result, individual pupils have overcome barriers that have hindered their progress. Much of the support and guidance is instinctive and informal. The small minority of pupils who have emotional or behavioural needs do not have personal targets in their individual action plans. The recently adopted focus on philosophy and thinking skills is helping pupils to move beyond an understanding of acceptable conduct towards exploring deeper issues of human behaviour and relationships.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully empowered the teachers to take a full part in the development of the school. When the long-standing assistant headteacher left, the headteacher and the governing body, in consultation with the teachers, rearranged the staff deployment. As a result, all teachers are successfully meeting the needs of the age group for which they are responsible. Teachers responsible for generic school improvement, such as developing new tracking and assessment systems, have successfully supported their colleagues in adopting new practices. The plans for improvement clearly reflect the school's priorities. Pupils' progress in mathematics is a focus for the next academic year. Teachers discuss pupils' work to ensure their judgements are accurate and to identify and address any dips in progress. Several teachers have had additional training for their leadership roles. The effective governing body has been through the process of self-evaluation and provides the headteacher with good support. Governors are knowledgeable about pupils' attainment and progress and contribute to plans for development. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. The school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Staff and governors have had the appropriate training and the school ensures that all adults who regularly work with the pupils have had security checks.

It is an indication of the high regard the parents and carers have for the school that over 70 attended the concert. They are welcome in school and some give their time to, for example, hearing pupils read. The headteacher follows up their very few concerns

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rigorously. However, sometimes meetings and telephone conversations are not recorded, so parents and carers cannot always see how their concerns have been addressed. Parents' and carers' views are valued and the school regularly seeks their opinions on a range of issues, the most recent being the provision of extra-curricular activities. Good links with the middle school and pre-school help children and pupils prepare for the next stage in their education. The Mother and Toddler club, run by the pre-school leader, is much appreciated. It provides a range of fun activities for the children and a chance for parents and carers to get together over tea. The health visitor attends every month, providing additional support. This is an example of the school's good contribution to community cohesion. The response to current affairs helps pupils to develop an understanding of the world beyond the local community. Pupils learn about different faiths and the similarities between them. Visits from a member of the Jewish community in Cambridge are planned and junior pupils are developing links with a French family. 'Bertie Bear' travels the world with members of the school community and communicates with pupils through postcards and emails. This helps pupils to understand the similarities and differences of communities beyond their locality.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and endeavours to ensure that each pupil has access to all the school offers. Staff are aware that, at present, some pupils do not have access to extra-curricular activities that interest them and are taking steps to address this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The teacher for the Early Years Foundation Stage was new to the Reception class in September. She is knowledgeable about the way children learn and has very successfully planned the curriculum and environment to enable them to learn through interesting and

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well-focused activities. For much of the time, children initiate their own learning while adults carefully observe their skills and aptitudes. Adult-led learning enables children to learn the basic skills they need, which they apply to their own activities. As a result, children love to work and play alongside each other and in cooperation with their friends. Adults encourage them to express and develop their ideas. During the inspection, children were making homes for fairy-tale characters. They all knew that one of their objectives was to ask the questions, 'Will this be the right home for my character?' and 'How could I make it better?' They selected their own materials and helped each other to find what they needed.

The adults constantly note children's successes and identify their next steps. These notes are correlated to form a record of each child's progress. These records show that children have made good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning, many exceeding age-related expectations. They also identify any gaps in learning that need to be addressed. Parents, carers and children do not contribute to any ongoing record of children's achievements at school or at home at present, but this is an area that the teacher wishes to develop.

Children are very well cared for and are obviously thoroughly enjoying their learning. The independence they have in the way they learn is preparing them very well for Year 1.

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

The percentage of questionnaire forms returned was significantly higher than in most schools. Almost all parents and carers are extremely positive about all aspects of the school. One parent wrote, for example, 'The school has always given both my children the care and support they need to help them develop to the best of their abilities.' A small minority of parents and carers feel that there should be a wider range of extra-curricular activities. A very few parents and carers have some concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection found that the range of additional activities is limited. The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary and the school deals effectively with any inappropriate behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	70	20	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	72	17	25	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	61	26	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	58	26	39	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	70	20	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	64	23	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	61	23	34	1	1	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)	36	54	25	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	57	27	40	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	51	26	39	3	4	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	48	28	42	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	43	64	22	33	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	66	22	33	1	1	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).

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">■ 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.



30 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1RE

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing how happy you all are in school. We were pleased to see your outstanding behaviour and the way that you look after each other. Well done. I thoroughly enjoyed your concert. You sing very well and I know that all your visitors enjoyed it as much as I did.

By the time you leave the school, many of you have high standards, especially in reading and writing, because you make good progress through the school. This is because you work hard and have good teachers. I have asked them to do some things to help you learn even better.

I would like them to make sure that every one of you in Key Stage 2 has enough challenge in mathematics. This is because some of you told me that your work was too easy and I could see that in some of your books you always get your work correct. As you know, we all learn from our mistakes! I would like more of you to decide for yourselves how well you have done so that you can set your own targets. You learn about lots of interesting things but I think you should be able to decide what you would like to learn about sometimes, as well. This will help you make your work even better and to learn about things that really excite you. I have also asked your teachers to help each other by seeing how well the things they have done to make their teaching even better are working.

Your good school is led and managed well, and all the adults take good care of you. Those of you who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to your school life and new pupils are welcomed. You are well equipped for your new schools when you leave.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Dawson

Lead inspector

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