

Great Hockham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120819
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380110
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Sawyer
Headteacher	Valerie Pye (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team visited nine lessons taught by five teachers or support staff. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, and spoke informally to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring records, analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised responses to questionnaires returned by 30 parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

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

- How effectively does the school meet the needs of more-able pupils?
- What impact is the revised curriculum having on outcomes for pupils?
- What has been the impact of the acting headteacher this term on school improvement?

Information about the school

Great Hockham is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 and 2 class. Other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes containing two year groups. The school has gained the High Quality Physical Education Norfolk Quality Chartermark 2011-2013. At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting headteacher for one 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Great Hockham Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The school is undergoing a period of transition while the governing body is seeking to appoint a permanent headteacher. This term the acting headteacher has been successful in uniting staff around a vision that places pupils' achievement and well-being at its heart. This has enabled all pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. There has been a particular emphasis on supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. While a greater proportion of pupils than expected attain average standards by the end of Year 6, too few pupils attain the higher levels in English and mathematics. This is because more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a satisfactory start to their schooling, and enjoy taking part in some imaginative activities linked to a theme. However, staff do not give children enough opportunities to use the outside area so that they can experience the different areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relationships in class are good. Teachers make sure pupils understand what they are learning and often maintain a brisk pace. Teaching assistants are used well to take a leading role in supporting learning. However, marking varies in the extent to which it shows pupils how to improve their work. The school has developed expertise in using drama to bring the curriculum to life, which contributes to pupils' good personal development. Opportunities are sometimes missed to build on this work through encouraging pupils to write extensively about their experiences. Pupils behave well and the older ones care for the younger ones. They say they feel safe at school, a view supported by parents and carers. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and take plenty of exercise both at school and outside it. Many excel at martial arts. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good. The school is especially adept at helping pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to overcome barriers to learning.

Through sickness and changes in the leadership of the school, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been uneven over recent months. In particular, much of the self-evaluation has been undertaken by the acting headteacher, with insufficient input from other members of staff. The governing body has been very supportive of the school, and has shown clear leadership in its handling of the transition period, but has not always focused on the school's most pressing priorities. A new monitoring policy has been adopted to help members of the governing body

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to evaluate how effectively the school promotes pupils' progress and attainment. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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 standards and achievement in English and mathematics at the higher levels by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write extended pieces of work
 - ensuring more-able pupils are given consistently challenging work
 - ensuring marking shows all pupils how to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing a long-term solution to the present uncertainty at senior leadership level
 - involving all staff fully in school self-evaluation
 - developing the monitoring role of the governing body in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress and standards.
- Make more use of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area to develop children's skills and abilities in all six areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning, evidenced by their good attendance, and achieve satisfactorily. They like to be actively involved in lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils had a good grasp of odd and even numbers as they delivered Christmas cards in a 'street' as part of their village project. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 created an impressive dramatic effect as 'kings' and 'beggars', using movement and descriptive vocabulary to portray a scene from the lives of both groups. Occasionally, more-able pupils are not challenged enough and are given work that is too easy for them. When this happens, they miss opportunities to develop their skills to achieve the higher levels in National Curriculum tests. Girls and boys both make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and or/disabilities achieve well because staff identify their needs early and provide structured programmes of study that enable them to progress at a faster rate than their peers. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress and their needs are appropriately met.

Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and are confident that any well-being issues they raise will be dealt with promptly. They promote healthy lifestyles through their involvement in cookery and gardening clubs, and through making the most of

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play equipment at break times to exercise. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the 'School Forum', where they all put forward their views, for example to set up a new rewards system. They take on responsibilities willingly as librarians, and on the 'cup-cake committee' to raise funds. Pupils are actively involved in the village, attending the Remembrance Service at the war memorial and taking part in the annual 'Horn Fair'. They care for the environment, for example by planting a school orchard. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Drama makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development as they examine moral dilemmas. Their understanding of other cultures comes mainly through curriculum subjects rather than first-hand experience.

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	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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils but do not always involve them in agreeing the criteria by which they will know if they have been successful in learning. Teachers often use questioning well to assess pupils' understanding and to move them on in their thinking. In more successful lessons, teachers often link learning to a theme that offers a good level of challenge. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed working out the correct order of names to the second alphabetical letter when sorting post as part of their village project. This good practice is not consistent across the whole school, however. At times, teachers do not plan sufficiently precisely to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes, especially the more able. Assessment is satisfactory, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive useful feedback about their work which helps to identify the next steps in their learning.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Elsewhere in the school, the quality of marking is uneven, however, and sometimes offers praise without constructive criticism.

Much work has been done in developing the curriculum, with particular benefits for pupils’ confidence and their personal development. Progress has not been so marked in their academic attainment, however. Innovations such as a mobile radio studio have given opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and make programmes. While there are visits to local places of interest, pupils tend not to be taken further afield, or for residential visits. This reduces the scope for pupils to try new experiences away from home, or to meet others from different backgrounds from their own. The school has good links with outside agencies, which provide support and advice in helping it to care well for all its pupils. The school can point to situations where it has supported families facing particular difficulties with, for example, the result that pupils’ attendance has risen. In this small school, all pupils are known as individuals and parents and carers value the support they receive. One commented, ‘The teachers care very much for all aspects of the children’s education.’

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The present uncertainty about the leadership of the school, with the acting headteacher retiring at Christmas, is a cause for concern for many parents and carers, and this is reflected in the questionnaires. The governing body has taken appropriate steps to secure future arrangements, but is constrained by confidentiality and circumstances beyond its control from sharing much information with parents and carers at this stage. The acting headteacher has brought a renewed sense of purpose to the school and is supported by an extremely committed and resilient staff team. She has identified the key areas for improvement and, together with the assistant headteacher, drawn up plans to tackle them, already making a significant impact on the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties. Staff are aware of the school’s priorities for development, but have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring aspects of its work to make a significant contribution to self-evaluation. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has paid particular attention to ensuring policies are robust and unique to the school, but is now refocusing on monitoring the effectiveness of the school’s work in raising standards and achievement.

The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. It

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ensures all pupils are included whatever their needs, and analyses the performance of different groups to ensure any gaps in attainment are identified and tackled. Through this work, it has identified that more-able pupils are not all reaching the standards they could because of inconsistency in the level of challenge in lessons. Measures are being introduced to deal with this. Safeguarding arrangements are good with particularly effective systems for recording any concerns and ensuring all staff are fully trained in child protection procedures. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, reaching out well to local groups and it is very much a centre of village life. The school’s work to give pupils direct experience of those from backgrounds and cultures different from their own in the United Kingdom and abroad is at an earlier stage of development.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join Reception with a wide range of skills and abilities generally in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with average standards in most areas of learning. They benefit from interacting with older pupils in their class and make rapid progress in their social and emotional development. Good learning often takes place in adult-led activities, with a focus on developing early literacy and numeracy skills. Children do not have so many opportunities to explore for themselves outside, as the outdoor area is under-used. Children enjoy a range of interesting activities often linked to a theme, such as ‘the village’, with an interesting role-play area that combines several shops, a post office and a church. Children took pride in filling out special delivery forms.

Satisfactory leadership ensures careful records are kept of children’s achievements, and there are positive relationships with parents and carers. Staff ensure that

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children are happy and safe in the purposeful working environment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was above average. All agreed that their children enjoy school and that the school encourages them to choose a healthy lifestyle. A small minority of parents and carers did not feel their children were making sufficient progress, or were not happy with the leadership and management of the school. Written comments explained that they felt that more-able pupils in particular were not always sufficiently challenged, something inspectors also found. While parents and carers supported the changes introduced by the acting headteacher, they were concerned by the uncertainty around the senior leadership of the school and felt that the governing body had not kept them well informed about developments. Inspectors found that the acting headteacher has made a positive contribution to the school’s development in the short time she has been in post, and that the governing body has acted appropriately in how it has handled the difficulties around securing the future leadership of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Hockham 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 71 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	57	7	23	5	17	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	53	7	23	3	10	4	13
The teaching is good at this school	18	60	10	33	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	12	40	10	33	3	10	3	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	53	13	43	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)	16	53	11	37	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	50	8	27	3	10	3	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	43	15	50	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	37	11	37	2	7	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	9	30	6	20	5	17	3	10
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	18	60	5	17	7	23	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Hockham Primary School, Thetford, IP24 1PB

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for sharing your views with us. We found that Great Hockham provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. These are some of its strengths.

- Those of you who sometimes find learning difficult make good progress in your work.
- You feel safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy.
- You behave well in class and around the school, the older ones looking out for the younger ones.
- You help out around the school well and get involved in activities in the village.
- Your attendance is good.
- The school cares for you well, especially if you are facing difficulties.

In order for the school to improve even more, we have asked your teachers and the governing body to:

- make sure those of you who find learning easier are given work to do that makes you really think so that you can do your best
- give you opportunities to write at length
- always use marking to show you how to improve your work
- appoint a new permanent headteacher as soon as they can
- make sure both teachers and members of the governing body check how well you are doing
- give the youngest children more time to learn outdoors.

You all can help by working hard and telling your teachers what you would look for in a new headteacher.

Thank you once again for your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt
Lead inspector

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