

# The Harrowby Church of England Infant School, Grantham

New Beacon Road, , Grantham, NG31 9LJ

**Inspection dates** 7–8 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. In 2012, progress sped up quickly. Standards by the end of Year 2 were significantly high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Good teaching and outstanding leadership are largely responsible for the recent rise in pupils' attainment.
- The excellent strategies leaders introduced to improve the teaching of reading are having a strong impact on all learning.
- The support leaders organise for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very well managed and helps these pupils to make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Classrooms are a buzz of extremely purposeful learning because pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are thoroughly interested and attentive.
- The improved collection of information about pupils' learning is used well by leaders to assess and improve the quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders are making a very strong contribution to the drive for improvement.
- All the school's leaders and managers know exactly what to do to improve the school further.
- The conversion to academy status has been managed exceptionally well to enhance pupils' educational experiences and teachers' expertise.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet having an outstanding impact on all pupils' achievement. Teachers sometimes go over work too many times and tasks do not always fully extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently help pupils understand the next steps in their learning, and pupils are not always given time to respond to it.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons, the majority with members of the leadership team. She also made some additional short visits to lessons, spending over five hours looking at learning. All the teachers were seen teaching.
- The inspector heard pupils read, as well as checking the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing and mathematics and their work in other subjects.
- Meetings were held with two governors, and a discussion held with an external consultant used by the Academies Trust.
- The inspector spoke to some parents as they collected their children from school, and took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as parents' responses to school surveys, and the 26 responses received to the staff survey.
- The inspector considered the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessment information that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress.
- External consultants' written reviews about the academy's improvement and progress were also checked.

## Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- The school converted to become an academy school in July 2012, keeping its former name, and forming an Academies Trust with the nearby junior school, to which it had been federated for several years, under the same headteacher and governing body.
- When the school's predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception setting for 57 four-year-olds taught in a large indoor and outdoor space.
- The vast majority of pupils, a higher proportion than average, are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or in the care of the local authority, or from forces families, all of whom are represented in the school.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. This includes pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has Healthy Schools status and a number of other awards including ActiveMark and the full International Schools Award.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers:
  - quickly adjust planning when pupils show they already understand the work
  - always set the right level of work to extend and deepen knowledge, skills and understanding for each different ability
  - use marking that gives guidance for pupils to improve, and that pupils respond to it.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points so that more pupils than average reach the levels expected for their age, by the end of Year 2, in English and mathematics.
- In 2012, because leaders' checks on teaching were more rigorous and guided sharp improvements, pupils' progress sped up and attainment rose. It was significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although the 2012 results were very strong, achievement is not outstanding because this level of progress is not yet sustained or consistent.
- Most Reception children start school with skills and abilities that are about the same as most four year olds. They soon settle in the spacious well-organised setting and usually make the progress expected for children of their age. In 2012, attainment rose. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 build well on the foundations laid in Reception. However, throughout the school, progress in some lessons slows as the tasks pupils are provided with are sometimes too easy and do not always extend or deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- The upturn in pupils' attainment and progress overall includes those eligible for the pupil premium. The additional funding provides carefully tailored interventions and programmes, such as specialised one-to-one support and additional extra-curricular activities, that develop pupils' confidence to learn. Teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' progress and performance in English and mathematics show that pupils for whom the school receives additional funding are catching up with their classmates and the 2012 results show that they are now only about a term behind in mathematics and about two terms behind in English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards their learning targets. Increasingly, pupils who are identified as having special educational needs are reaching the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The combination of good teaching, fostering good relations, and very well-managed special educational needs provision, means that pupils who find learning difficult or have specific learning difficulties soon gain the confidence and skills they need to read and write on their own and means that there is no discrimination and pupils are given equal opportunities to learn.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Well-focused training and robust interventions by leaders have resulted in much improved and accurate assessments of pupils' progress and performance. This has made a significant contribution to the better quality of teaching which has helped to speed up pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations and learning targets for pupils to aim for are ambitious. There is no inadequate teaching and little requires improvement.
- The most effective teaching adapts to the needs and abilities of pupils during the lesson. During question-and-answer sessions or class discussions, for example, teachers adapt their questions to include more challenging and thought-provoking tasks for pupils to consider, as in a lively session where a mixed group of Year 1 and 2 pupils wrote their own notes under their own choice of sub-headings, before writing a report. This level of challenge is not always the case, so learning is not being extended in all lessons.

- Although most of the teaching is at least good, in some lessons teachers do not adjust their planning quickly enough when pupils show they understand a concept, so they go over work that pupils already know, slowing down learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and support staff are good at engaging the children. Work based on popular stories such as *The Gruffalo* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* develop a good balance between adult-directed activities and tasks that children choose for themselves. Sometimes, however, teachers miss signals that children are ready to learn at a faster pace.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is part of a whole-school initiative led exceptionally well by the literacy coordinator. This is laying solid foundations for pupils' early language skills and is responsible for the much-improved outcomes seen in Year 2. At phonics time every corner of the school buzzes with activities matched to pupils' abilities and staff are well trained in the programme.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved well since the last inspection, through excellent guidance from the mathematics coordinator. Pupils are now engaged in more varied and practical problem-solving activities well matched because they are taught in ability sets. In some lessons, however, teachers miss opportunities to provide more-able pupils with extended calculation tasks aimed at improving their reasoning skills.
- Teachers' marking is of varied quality. Some is clear and helpful to pupils and refers to their individual learning targets so that pupils know what to do next to reach higher levels. However, this is not consistent across all subjects, and even when marking is good, pupils are not often given time to respond, so that their later work repeats the same errors.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- There is a warm buzz of welcoming, friendly greeting among pupils as they enter confidently in the morning. Pupils treat each other and the adults in school with a high degree of respect. They cooperate exceptionally well in lessons and willingly help each other. These characteristics make a very positive contribution to their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils' behaviour is first class and managed very well by teachers. Systems for managing pupils' behaviour have improved since the last inspection, reflecting sharp improvements in leadership at all levels.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They respond exceptionally well to learning in lessons. They are keen to get on with tasks, to ask and answer questions, or contribute to group or class discussions. For example, pupils in Year 2 thrived on the opportunity they were given to offer or share ideas about a story they were planning derived from their science work on the planets.
- Parents' surveys and their responses to Parent View show they all feel their child is happy and feels safe at the school and that behaviour is well-managed. The school's behaviour and exclusion records indicate that bullying is very rare and there have been no exclusions in recent years. The many pupils spoken to about bullying believe that staff deal very well with any rare disagreements, incidents of name-calling or times when pupils upset others.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Leaders have managed the change to academy status very well and have set the school on a firm path to continuous improvement. Because of this, pupils have enjoyed an increased quality of teaching, support for learning and preparation for their next school. This has underpinned the rise in pupils' attainment in 2012.

- Subject leaders' skills are being used to the full to drive improvement. As a result, teachers' use of assessment has improved significantly through joint activities with the sister school, and shared expertise.
- Leaders at all levels are now making teachers more accountable for their performance and the progress of the pupils they teach. They assure the quality of lessons and monitor pupils' progress and performance robustly. This has led to the rapid increase in progress pupils made last year.
- Subjects are planned to link together wherever possible, and exciting topics bring learning to life, appealing to boys as well as girls, and to all abilities. Work on 'Space' not only links science, literacy and numeracy, but also includes geography and history. This strategy helps the exceptionally strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The philosophy of giving pupils something to aim for has helped the school achieve many awards for its provision, including the Active Mark, Healthy Schools status, and the full International School Award.
- The school consults with external advisers who offer good support and have helped see that leaders know exactly what to do to help the school improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Following the grant of academy status, and previously, during the process while still a 'hard federation', governors developed into a highly effective body that holds the school's leaders and staff rigorously to account. This has helped lead to the sharp rise in attainment. The governing body is diligent in checking that it has first-hand evidence of pupils' and teachers' performance and understanding how good the school is in relation to others. Governors manage the school's budget effectively. The governing body has been informed about the use of the pupil premium and knows it is having a positive impact. Procedures for managing staff performance help governors to see that they link very well to salary progression. They know what is being done to reward good teaching and to tackle any performance that falls short. Governors make sure that all safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138283
<b>Local authority</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	409383

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eric McDonald
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Gibbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01476 564417
<b>Fax number</b>	01476 564417
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@harrowby.lincs.sch.uk

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