

Signhills Infant Academy

Hardys Road, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, DN35 0DN

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from starting points that are typical for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average.
- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Relationships are strong and classrooms are well organised and managed.
- The friendly and caring school atmosphere fosters good and sometimes exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe, and are keen to learn.
- Recent improvements in self-evaluation mean senior leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Consequently, recent changes, such as improvements to teaching pupils about letters and sounds, are having a very positive impact.
- Middle leaders are clear about the school's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. They have effective plans in place and have begun to make improvements.
- The curriculum is good and is very effectively enriched with a wide range of sports and creative activities during the school day and after school. All pupils take swimming lessons and almost all successfully learn to swim by the time they leave Year 2.
- Recent training and improvements to the information provided for governors mean they are now much clearer about their role and responsibilities and beginning to be more challenging of the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teaching does not always stretch all pupils, particularly in their writing.
- Sometimes pupils do not respond to teachers' marking of their work and do not make corrections quickly.
- In the Reception classes, the outdoor space is not used effectively to develop children's physical skills or their basic reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or part lessons; five of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, two members of the governing body, school staff, including those with responsibilities for subjects, and a local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the 142 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' current progress, records from the observation of lessons, pupils' books and school improvement planning. They also considered documentation in relation to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Edward Price

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is similar to an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- Currently, a below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a few pupils from minority ethnic groups. A very few speak English as an additional language.
- This is the first inspection of Signhills Infant Academy since it converted to become an academy on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Signhills Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- There have been a number of changes to staff since that inspection. The headteacher took up post in January 2014 along with two of the teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the few remaining inconsistencies are ironed out and more teaching is outstanding to raise achievement further, by:
 - ensuring tasks are always set at the right level to challenge fully all pupils and enable them to make accelerated progress in writing, particularly boys
 - ensuring that the regular assessments of writing are better used to pinpoint any specific difficulties pupils are having
 - ensuring pupils respond to their teachers' marking and make corrections quickly
 - continuing to review and develop varied approaches to promote the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and so reduce further the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in writing
 - developing the use of the outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception classes.
- Develop further the effectiveness of leaders and managers by building on the recent improvements in the role of governors so that they more systematically challenge the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at the academy. Work in their books, work displayed on classroom walls and the school's tracking data all confirm that pupils achieve well over time.
- Children come into the Reception classes with skills which are typical for their age. They make good progress and reach standards which are above average when they enter Year 1.
- Although pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1, this is a little variable in some Year 1 classes but it accelerates in Year 2. Consequently, results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. At the end of Year 1, pupils' results in the national phonics screening check (a check to see if pupils understand the link between letters and the sounds they represent) improved to above average. By the end of Year 2, an above-average proportion of those pupils who retake the test are successful.
- Pupils' progress in reading continues to speed up as they move through the school. Good-quality, systematic phonics teaching, complemented by a range of approaches to teaching reading, helps pupils to become proficient readers and enjoy reading for pleasure.
- In mathematics, pupils develop good skills that they use to solve real-life problems. For example, some Year 2 pupils extended their understanding that division was the inverse of multiplication by sharing sweets equally between plates.
- The pupil premium money is spent on a range of activities, including funding the role of a learning mentor. Her work with pupils and their families has had a positive impact on improving attendance and consequently achievement. Generally, pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress and reach average standards. However, although it has been successfully narrowed in reading and mathematics, a gap in attainment of approximately one term between these pupils and their classmates remains in writing.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, achieve well, particularly in reading. However, in a small number of lessons, the work is not always carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly boys in writing. Consequently, pupils are not always challenged sufficiently well to enable them to achieve their best.
- The small numbers of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive appropriate help from teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall with a small amount that is outstanding, along with a small amount which requires improvement. Relationships are a strength and pupils respond to this good teaching by working hard and making good progress over time. Classes are managed well and an atmosphere of care and trust prevails.
- Effective teaching in the Reception classes, combined with a welcoming and stimulating environment, ensures that children feel safe and become confident learners with good levels of independence. Children benefit from a good range of adult-led activities and those they can choose for themselves. For example, while some children worked with an adult to taste and describe fruit, others worked at interesting activities including making their own graphs to show their classmates' favourite fruits.
- The Reception classrooms are well organised, with a language-rich environment which helps children to develop their reading and writing skills. However, the outdoor area is less well developed and is not used to full effect to develop children's physical skills or their basic reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well, for example, when teaching pupils about letters

and sounds and how to identify features of persuasive texts. Topics are explained clearly and probing questions are asked to check how well pupils understand what they are learning.

- Assessment is regular and generally effectively used to promote pupils' good quality learning. An exception to this is that it is not always used as well as it might be to identify where pupils need extra help with their writing.
- Teaching assistants are used well and make a particularly effective contribution to teaching pupils how to read by developing their knowledge of letters and sounds. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given extra help, which enables them to make good progress overall.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in lessons. Pupils work together in pairs and teams to share resources, speak and listen to each other and discuss their ideas sensibly.
- There are often very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able. Although all groups of pupils make good progress, in a few lessons, the tasks are not set at just the right level for all pupils, particularly some boys in writing, on these occasions progress is not as strong.
- Work is marked regularly and provides both encouraging comments and points for improvement. However, on occasions marking does not lead to improvement for all pupils and pupils do not always correct mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is confirmed by comments made by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils get on well in classrooms and around the school and say this is typically the case. Their positive attitudes to school and learning contribute significantly to their good learning over time. However, this aspect is not outstanding because, sometimes, when the pace of learning slows, pupils' interest and attitudes wane and they are not fully engaged or on-task. This is particularly evident in the small number of instances where teaching requires improvement.
- There have been no exclusions from the academy. Incidents of bullying or of the use of racist language are extremely rare.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They know the dangers associated with using the internet. They understand what bullying is and state that if any were to occur, it would be dealt with by their teachers and the support staff.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the academy. For example, assemblies are used to mark seasonal festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Christmas.
- Pupils are extremely polite to adults, very keen to talk about their school, respect one another, and work and play well together. Pupils can talk about stories where characters' actions have had a detrimental impact on others. This helps them to develop an understanding of right and wrong.
- Robust systems to follow up all absences have helped to improve rates of attendance so that it is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- Very accurate self-evaluation conducted by the headteacher means that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Recent improvements mean that lessons are evaluated accurately and teachers are provided with feedback on how to improve their work and the learning of pupils.
- The headteacher has sharpened the accountability arrangements for all staff and she has raised the expectations for their work. Consequently, these recent changes mean that performance

management is being used effectively.

- Some middle leaders are new into post but, nevertheless, have a clear understanding of the areas for improvement. They have effective and well-thought-out plans in place, which they are beginning to implement. They check on the impact by scrutinising work and talking to pupils. They have plans to develop their role further by checking on the impact in classrooms.
- Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to improve progress and attainment in writing, particularly for boys and some pupils supported by the pupil premium. They have understandably been reviewing the use of the pupil premium funding on pupils' progress and attainment. Although there have been successes narrowing the gap between these pupils and their peers in reading and mathematics, it has not been as successful in writing. Consequently, leaders are investigating more effective strategies and approaches for the use of the funding.
- Government funding to support physical education is spent well on specialist sports coaches and equipment. Pupils say they enjoy physical exercise and they understand its importance in a healthy lifestyle.
- The academy has good relationships with the junior academy which shares the site. As a positive impact, pupils have many opportunities to learn to swim and are well ahead of where they would normally be expected to be by the time they are aged seven.
- The local authority has identified the academy as being in need of minimal support through its annual review of the academy's performance based on test results. Consequently, there has been only minimal involvement with the local authority. Some support has been provided for staff in the Reception classes in order to check on the accuracy of their assessments and this has been valued by the staff. Beyond this, senior leaders and governors are unable to identify any other impact of the local authority's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Recent improvements to the level of information provided to governors mean they are now aware of a wide range of aspects of the academy's performance. Consequently, they are increasingly knowledgeable about the school's performance data, the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is managed and linked to salary rewards. Recent training to help governors understand the academy's performance data has helped them to understand where improvement is needed. However, although there is evidence that governors have provided challenge to senior leaders, this is new and has not always been systematic. Governors understand their role in helping to ensure that children are kept safe and finances are managed soundly.

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

Unique reference number	138062
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	431349

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Spall
Headteacher	Allie Majer
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
Telephone number	01472 694993
Fax number	01472 600773
Email address	headteacher@signhillsinfants.co.uk

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