

Halton Holegate CofE Primary School

Station Road, Halton Holegate, Spilsby, PE23 5PB

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including the governing body, have ensured that teaching and learning have continued to flourish and all groups of pupils achieve well despite many recent staffing changes.
- Pupils behave well and show an eagerness to learn. They are courteous and respectful towards adults and each other.
- Pupils are safe in school. Adults know them well as individuals. Pupils know whom to turn to if they need help.
- Teachers adapt work well to cater for pupils in the mixed-age, mixed-ability classes. They make sure that tasks are engaging for both boys and girls, and are pitched at the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress as they move up the school. They achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They are being well prepared to take their places as citizens in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils rarely practise writing at length except in English lessons. Sometimes neither pupils nor teachers pay enough attention to the accuracy of pupils' writing in lessons other than English.
- Some pupils understand mathematical processes but cannot apply these to solving actual problems.
- Pupils do not always understand or learn from the advice teachers give them when they mark their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all three classes. He looked in detail at pupils' work to assess the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time. He carried out lesson observations jointly with the headteacher. He listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, parents, the headteacher and other staff, governors and a representative of the local authority who has recently worked with the school.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents. These covered safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- He consulted the Parent View website, where 17 responses to the online questionnaire were displayed. He also examined the results of the school's own questionnaire for parents, to which 32 responses had recently been received.
- He analysed the responses to a questionnaire completed by seven members of staff.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- All pupils are White British. There are currently no pupils from other ethnic groups, and no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- At 11%, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care.
- At almost 28%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- Children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage full time and are taught in the same class as pupils in Years 1 and 2. There are two other mixed-age classes, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2013. Teachers in two of the three classes were new to the school in the present term after an extended period of staff changes.
- In 2014 there were too few pupils in Year 6 for the usual judgement to be made on whether the school met the government's floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that in all classes the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good or better, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise the skills of extended writing across a range of subjects, not just in English lessons
 - insisting that pupils pay good attention to the quality and accuracy of their written English in all subjects
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to a variety of real-life problems.
- Make sure that the comments teachers give when they mark pupils' work are succinct, easy to understand and sharply focused on showing pupils precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high ambitions for the school. He is keen to secure the best for all pupils. He has led the school well through a period of staffing changes, making sure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have remained good. Staff, including those very recently appointed, share these ambitions.
- Leaders and managers, including those with responsibility for specific subjects, have an accurate and perceptive view of the school. They keep all aspects of its work under stringent review. They seek ways in which it may be further improved.
- The quality of teaching is carefully checked by the headteacher. Staff are observed regularly and the work in pupils' books is checked. Individual staff have targets for improvement and these, in, turn, link to the overall school development plan. Pupils' progress is checked closely and decisive action taken if any individual is falling behind in their work.
- Teachers work in collaboration with colleagues from several other small schools in the locality as they seek to extend their skills and expertise. They have worked, for example, on developing skills to make sure that the most-able pupils reach their potential in writing, and on the most effective ways of teaching mathematics in mixed-age classes.
- The local authority, recognising the school's good overall effectiveness, has provided only limited support. It helped the new headteacher to settle in, and has helped teachers to check that they grade pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics in line with standards applied nationally. As a result parents can be confident that the information they receive about pupils' standards is accurate.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy after-school sport and music as well as clubs for such things as gardening. Older pupils have residential visits where they take part in adventurous activities to develop their confidence and resilience. Special events, such as a recent presentation on the weather by a visiting speaker, or World Maths Day involving a variety of fun activities, cause great excitement and are greatly enjoyed.
- Extra funding for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) is used well to provide extra teaching support for these pupils. Its impact has been effective in closing the gaps in attainment between them and other pupils. It is also used to help these pupils take part in out-of-school activities.
- The recently introduced sport funding is used well to extend pupils' participation in sport and to allow them to grow in health and physical well-being. Pupils have opportunities to try out a wider range of sports with specialist instructors. The skills and expertise of teachers are also being developed, and pupils now have more opportunities to take part in sporting competitions with other schools. The impact of the new funding is being checked carefully.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Five of the 11 governors have been appointed within the last year. They have been given good support during their induction period. The governing body is well organised and well informed. Governors have a clear insight into the school's strengths and areas for development. They know clearly how its performance compares with that of schools nationally.
 - Governors know what the quality of teaching is. They make sure that staff performance is managed effectively. They check that as staff move up the pay scale, promotions are only given when their impact on pupils' achievement shows that they are fully deserved.
 - Governors ask sharply focused questions and are not afraid to challenge the headteacher in their quest to secure the best for pupils. They understand how the pupil premium funding is used and the impact this has had on the achievement of eligible pupils.
 - Governors make sure that pupils are well prepared for their roles as citizens in modern Britain, and are aware of the need for tolerance and understanding towards people whose beliefs or backgrounds may be different from their own.
 - Governors are meticulous in making sure that all requirements for the safeguarding and protection of

pupils are fully met, and are effective. Their strong commitment to equal opportunities ensures that no pupil is denied access to anything the school offers on any grounds whatsoever.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From the beginning of the Reception Year, teachers make clear to pupils what is expected of them. Pupils' good behaviour makes the school a calm and orderly community where they can learn unhindered. Pupils show curiosity and an eagerness to learn. Attendance is consistently above average.
- Relationships are good. Pupils are known well as individuals. Adults treat pupils with warmth and respect, giving them lots of praise and encouragement which develops their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are polite and courteous. They listen well. Right from the start, they learn to take turns and to share things.
- Pupils, parents and staff talk about the school's 'family atmosphere'. This was evident during the inspection when the headteacher received a letter saying that a pupil had won a prize in a county poetry competition. He immediately went to the hall where pupils were having lunch and told them the news. Pupils spontaneously broke into applause for the prize winner as they shared in the pride and delight of the occasion.
- Pupils are proud to take on jobs to serve their school community, for example as school councillors, librarians, assembly or tuck shop monitors, or on the eco team. All pupils in Year 6 take on at least one such role. Pupils help people less fortunate than themselves through regular charity collections, often suggesting fundraising ideas themselves.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. With inspiration from a visiting artist, pupils have created impressive artwork to express the school's values, such as 'courage', 'humility' and 'forgiveness'. This artwork reflects deep thinking on the pupils' part. Although all current pupils are White British, they show a good awareness of the diversity of modern British society. They speak knowledgeably about other people's backgrounds and beliefs.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Access to the school is secure and all staff are checked prior to appointment. Pupils and their parents rightly say that pupils are safe in school.
- All parents and pupils who were asked said that bullying is not an issue at this school. Pupils show a good awareness of bullying and the different forms it can take, including internet-based bullying. They are aware of how to avoid it and are confident that staff will handle it appropriately if it did occur.
- Safety matters are taken very seriously and procedures are robust. Appropriate to the age of the pupils, safety features regularly in lessons or assemblies. Pupils talked about the impact that visits from the police and an e-safety specialist had had on them.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It draws on a wide range of outside agencies to do so. The inspector saw how this support had allowed such pupils to settle down in school and make the most of what it provides. Their confidence and enthusiasm for school have grown and they have made similar progress to other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching promotes good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the Reception Year onwards. Teachers know their subjects well and explain things clearly and confidently. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They know pupils well and give them tasks which are well matched to their capabilities.

- Teachers are skilful in framing questions so they can check that all pupils are keeping up with what is being explained. They carefully rephrase things or give extra detail if it appears that anyone is falling behind. In a mathematics lesson on presenting information on bar charts, for example, groups of pupils were given different tasks according to their abilities. After the initial explanation, the teacher and the teaching assistants circulated, offering help and advice to make sure pupils' learning was secure.
- In the mixed-age, mixed-ability classes teachers plan carefully to make sure that the work they prepare for different groups of pupils will stretch them appropriately. In an English lesson, for example, where pupils were learning to enhance the impact of their writing by using sophisticated punctuation, the teacher had devised a series of graded tasks which engaged pupils' interest well and captured their imagination. Consequently progress was good.
- The school gives good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well briefed and well prepared. They are familiar with pupils' learning needs and work patiently with them, either in class or in small group or one-to-one activities nearby. They give lots of encouragement so that pupils grow in confidence.
- Teachers mark work regularly and conscientiously. They add comments which often show pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their work further. Most of the time pupils say they find these comments helpful and act on the advice given. However, pupils told the inspector that they do not always understand what the teacher has written. This reduces the effectiveness of the feedback.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress, and in some cases exceptional progress, as they move up the school. Their starting points, when they join the Reception Year, vary greatly. For some individuals they are well below those typical for their age in communication and numeracy. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards alone are not particularly meaningful in such a small school, but this does represent good achievement for all groups.
- Boys and girls make equally good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. Their needs are identified early and they receive good support which helps them grow in confidence in their learning.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they are given specific tasks which are carefully thought out and designed to make them think deeply about their work and make rapid progress. In the mixed-age, mixed-ability classes they are given demanding work and are not held back.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils. Throughout the school the gaps between their standards in reading, writing and mathematics and those of other pupils have been closed. In some cases their standards are higher. No pupils in Year 6 were eligible for pupil premium support in 2014.
- In 2014 100% of the Year 1 pupils reached the expected level in the national check on phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they represent). This was well above the national average at 74%. Pupils achieve well in reading because it is taught effectively. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their love of reading and the kinds of things they particularly like to read. Most say they read every day at home.
- More-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with excellent expression, showing above-average levels of skill. Less-able pupils in these years read more hesitantly and are sometimes inclined to make guesses at words rather than reading them closely. They could, however, show the inspector confidently how they cope with unfamiliar words using the 'sounding out' techniques they have been taught.
- Pupils achieve well in writing because they are given lots of opportunities to practise the skill of writing at length in their English lessons. They also pay close attention to the advice they receive on how to improve their work. However, opportunities to practise extended writing in subjects other than English are underdeveloped. This limits their achievement.

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because they are given the tasks challenge them well and engage their interest. A lesson on averages, for example, presented pupils with a range of carefully sequenced tasks which developed their understanding as they worked through them. Pupils remained deeply engrossed in their work, and their confidence in handling the mathematical processes grew markedly.
- In some instances pupils, particularly middle-ability and less-able pupils, show a secure understanding of the mathematical principles but are less confident when applying these to real-life situations or solving actual problems. They may understand how to calculate an average when given a list of figures, for example, but are hesitant when faced with a scenario when the steps they need to take are not so clearly spelt out. This prevents achievement in mathematics from being better than good.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The Reception Year teacher and teaching assistants work together to plan activities. They make sure that these also link to with what the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, who share the same class, are doing. They check children's progress carefully and take decisive action if any child gives cause for concern.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Children are safe. They are known well as individuals. They quickly respond to the school's high expectations and learn the routines. They respond well to the warmth and encouragement they receive from adults.
- The quality of teaching is good. The classroom and outdoor area are welcoming and stimulating. The tasks set capture the interest of both boys and girls in all areas of learning. Adults constantly interact with children, seeking ways to develop their observational, language and mathematical skills.
- From very varied starting points, children achieve well. They are well prepared to move on to Year 1. The learning needs of disabled children and those who have special educational needs are swiftly identified, and steps are taken to make sure they are appropriately met.

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	120573
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	448683

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christina Holmes
Headteacher	Damian Sunter
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
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