

Inspection of Horncastle Primary School

Bowl Alley Lane, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 5EH

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Cook. This school is part of Wellspring Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cheryl Hobson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Horncastle Primary School is an inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy their learning. The school provides a range of opportunities that help pupils to develop their understanding of 'a world beyond Horncastle'. Pupils, staff, parents and carers say that it is a caring and friendly place to learn with a family feel. As one parent, typical of many, said, 'I love the school. I like the care and attention the teachers give to my child and myself.'

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve their full potential, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, most pupils build their knowledge across a range of subjects. Pupils were eager to share their learning with inspectors. They said that they enjoy learning new things each day and developing their independence using the school's '5 Bs' system.

Pupils behave well because they want to do 'the right thing'. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know that they have trusted adults to talk to and use the worry boxes or 'friendship stops' if they have any concerns. Pupils say that when they occasionally 'fall out' it is resolved very quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has been through a transformation. New leadership has swiftly identified areas for improvement and put effective strategies in place to improve pupils' experiences of school. The school has accessed support from the trust and external partners, such as the English and mathematics hubs. A new, ambitious and inclusive curriculum has been introduced. This curriculum carefully sequences the knowledge that pupils should learn. This supports all pupils to learn and remember more. The school's published outcomes do not yet reflect the improvements that have been made to the curriculum.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. In some subjects, teachers revisit prior learning and address any misconceptions. This helps pupils recall knowledge and make connections to current learning. In some foundation subjects, staff do not yet take a consistent approach to identifying gaps in pupils' learning. Staff are currently working on new assessment systems for these subjects.

Most staff skilfully 'adapt not adopt' resources to meet the needs of pupils. However, in some cases, this is not consistently the case. The work is not always matched to some pupils' needs. Staff are introducing systems to tailor lessons to support all pupils, including those with SEND.

Reading is a key priority. Well-trained staff teach pupils how to read so they quickly become accurate readers. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, quickly become fluent readers. Staff carefully check pupils' understanding and extra support is put in place, when necessary, to ensure that pupils succeed. The school helps pupils to develop a love of reading. There are different libraries including 'The Narnia

library', where pupils can disappear into a book. In every subject, there is a clear focus on the vocabulary that the pupils need to learn.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and number work. They develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers help pupils to make links between the different subjects they study. For example, pupils learn about Roman numerals in mathematics at the same time as learning about the Romans in history lessons. This helps pupils remember what they have studied as they can pin new knowledge to what they have already learned.

Children get off to a strong start to their education. The transition between Nursery into the Reception classes is well planned. Children enjoy the rich curriculum offer and learning about the world around them. From their first days in school, children develop a love of books. They loved 'Going on a Bear Hunt' and using their understanding of the story to map out the events. The environment is arranged to support all children with their learning.

The personal development offer is a strength of the school. Pupils understand why it is important to learn about other religions and cultures, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. As one pupil said, 'We need to respect others and be tolerant and kind.' They are knowledgeable about British values and protected characteristics. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They are well prepared for their next steps and enjoyed learning about life beyond school during a careers day.

Governors and trustees know their statutory duties. They hold leaders to account. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the school does not consistently check precisely what pupils know and can do. As a result, some pupils do not learn the intended curriculum as securely as they could. On occasions, pupils are not moved on to new learning at the most appropriate point. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, teachers check what pupils know and use this information to move pupils' learning on appropriately.
- In a small number of lessons, pupils, including those with SEND, do not receive support and guidance appropriate to their needs. As a result, they do not build their knowledge securely. The school should ensure that teachers have the information and strategies they need to provide precise and effective support to all pupils, including those with SEND.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148713
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10324223
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Hobson
CEO of trust	Mark Wilson
Headteacher	Andrew Cook
Website	www.horncastleprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club, which is managed by the local governing body.
- Horncastle Primary School converted to become an academy in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Horncastle Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. They also met with members of the local governing body, trustees and representatives of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and curriculum documentation in a range of other subjects, including science, geography, religious education and personal, social and health education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during playtimes and around the school site.
- The lead inspector visited an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and reviewed the responses to the school staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jon Brown, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Ellenor Beighton	Ofsted Inspector

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