



Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117789
LEA
Inspection number 280154
Inspection dates 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs S Herring

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highthorpe Crescent
School category	Community		Cleethorpes
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		DN35 9PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01472 698185
Number on roll	240	Fax number	01472 698185
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jackson
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Holbrook

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 December 2005 - 6 December 2005	Inspection number 280154
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by 2 additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-size primary school serves part of the seaside town of Cleethorpes. Children enter the school with skills that are broadly average for their age. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or with a Statement of Special Educational Need, is below average.

The school has linked with other schools in the town to consider several educational issues and to explore ways of extending the range of after-school activities on offer. Since September this year, the school's deputy headteacher has been its acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school, its pupils and their parents that this is a good school. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership during a period of considerable change to the management and staffing of the school. His judgements on the work of the school are accurate. Standards and achievement are good overall, and standards in science are outstanding by the time pupils leave the school. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve the same high standards in writing as they do in mathematics. Boys do not achieve as well as girls in the infants.

Provision for children in the reception class is good and so they make a good start to school life. Teaching is good overall. Teachers' high expectations and good relationships mean that pupils behave well and their personal development is good. Pupils are well cared for. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and places a good emphasis on the basic skills. However, the school recognises that there is scope to extend the range of activities to enrich learning.

The good standards achieved, and the good quality of care provided, indicate that the school gives good value for money. Good improvements in achievement in the infants since the last inspection, and recent improvements in evaluating its own work, mean the school is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by giving all pupils more opportunities to write in depth in all subjects and by providing more effective challenges for the more able pupils.
- Raise the achievement of boys in the infants by planning activities, resources and class organisation to engage their attention.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the reception class with a range of skills but their attainment is broadly average for their age. Good teaching, firmly based on purposeful, practical activities, enables children to achieve well so that they reach or exceed the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Children achieve well in the infants. In the 2005 assessment tasks in Year 2, the number of pupils achieving the expected level was above average, though fewer pupils attained the higher level in writing than in reading and mathematics. Boys achieved less well than girls. This is due in part to the available resources and the organisation of groups and classes, which engage the interest of girls more readily.

Pupils achieve well in the juniors. In the 2005 assessment tests, standards in science were outstanding and achievement exceptional. Standards were above average in English and mathematics. Though the number attaining the expected level was above

average in English and mathematics, fewer pupils reached the higher level in English than could be expected from their results in Year2, and so achievement was satisfactory overall in English.

Inspection evidence shows that current pupils are maintaining these good standards, whilst the school is examining ways to improve standards in the more advanced writing skills.

Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good level of support they receive. The small numbers of pupils at an early stage of learning English are making good progress because of the individual attention they receive from adults and the way they are totally included in all activities. For example, an older boy who had arrived at the school at the start of the term, speaking little English, was enjoying the responsibility of reading the names and distributing the Christmas cards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have good attitudes to work and say they enjoy school and have many favourite lessons. Their behaviour is good. The friendly, sociable atmosphere in school enables the pupils to become confident learners. Pupils are polite and courteous and listen to each other with respect. School takes note of their opinions and an impressive, mature school council has asked for and received a box of games equipment for playtimes.

The strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development in the reception class means that children develop good attitudes to school and learn to behave well from an early age.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development is satisfactory. It is supported by a personal health and social programme which is taught across the school and ensures that issues such as drugs awareness and sex education are dealt with appropriately. Whilst there are good opportunities for pupils to study their own local culture, as in their study of the Grimsby fishing industry, their preparation for life in a culturally diverse society is limited.

The school takes good account of the need for pupils to understand and adopt safe practices and a healthy lifestyle. For example, it provides fruit in the infants and organises the healthy afternoon activities for the whole school. Pupils are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the community and they respond well, for example by helping with the "buddy" system. They befriend pupils who need help and they show compassion by raising money for charity. The strong emphasis on basic skills and the good opportunities for working together ensure pupils are well prepared for their future education and working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. It is outstanding in science in Years 5 and 6 because of well-planned practical activities that promote thorough understanding. Where teaching is good, there are high expectations of presentation and of behaviour, and pupils work hard. The best lessons are lively, with clear objectives, and delivered with enthusiasm so that pupils are eager to learn. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are going to do and plan suitable tasks to enable learning. Teachers ask the pupils questions which make them think in order to extend their knowledge. Where teaching is good, thorough marking helps the pupils do better by giving points for improvement and examples of better organisation.

Where teaching is less effective, the pace is too slow or the expectation too low to challenge the more able pupils, or the chosen resources and activities do not engage the interest of all groups, especially boys. Assessment is satisfactory. It gives teachers accurate information but they are not using it consistently across the school. As a result, some teachers do not plan work that stretches the higher attainers to achieve as well as they can.

Pupils with learning difficulties are taught well and are well supported by their individual education plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is interesting, follows national guidelines, focuses clearly on basic skills, and provides for pupils' personal development, for example their awareness of health and safety. Opportunities are missed to make the curriculum more lively by improving its multicultural aspects, and enriching it further with elements that appeal to boys and activities that extend pupils' interests, skills and independence. Where pupils are given the opportunity to develop their writing skills by writing extended pieces in different subjects, their work is thoughtful and full of description and empathy. Too often, however, such opportunities are missed because of over-reliance on work sheets that require limited written answers.

A reasonable number of activities enrich learning after school. The school is currently investigating ways to extend these through co-operation with the local high school and other organisations.

The curriculum in the reception class is good. Purposeful, practical and well-planned activities enable children to make good progress in all the areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. A good range of systems ensures that pupils are safe and secure. All staff understand and follow the procedures for child protection. Pupils express complete trust in talking to their teacher or to the acting headteacher, as they are sure their problem will be dealt with in confidence. Care and support for vulnerable pupils are good. The acting headteacher and the staff know the children well and keep a close watch on their well-being.

Good behaviour is very effectively encouraged. The school rule is considered fair and is well understood and consistently followed by all. The pupils respond well to the reward systems in each class. Good-work assemblies reinforce the school's strong culture of hard work and helpful, cooperative behaviour.

The recently piloted assessment system is providing good information about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning, though it is not yet used consistently across the school. Where accurate assessment is used, as in one outstanding lesson, work is planned at different levels to ensure that pupils receive the right support, guidance and challenge to achieve their best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and maintain a clear and successful focus on raising standards. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership in a time of considerable change in the staffing and management of the school. He leads well by involving all the staff in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, and there is a good sense of staff working well together to move the school forward. The school's judgement of its work is accurate. The role of the curriculum coordinators is developing this term. They have analysed test results thoroughly to identify areas of weakness in mathematics and English, though it is too soon for this to have had an impact on standards. They have not yet had the chance to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. The members of the senior management team provide good role models of teaching, and this has a crucial influence on the good standards achieved.

Parents are consulted informally, and by questionnaire, to learn and consider their views. They strongly appreciate all that the school does for their children's academic and personal development, and their care and protection.

Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors visits the school daily and governors provide good moral support. However, they need to focus more urgently on the appointment of a permanent headteacher to dispel uncertainty.

There have been good improvements in standards and achievement in the infants since the last inspection. The good work of the acting headteacher, who is the substantive deputy headteacher, in evaluating the school's work means the school is well placed to move forward.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Mr Holbrook

Middlethorpe Primary School

Highthorpe Crescent

Cleethorpes

DN35 9PY

7 December, 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for making Mrs Lock and myself feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We agree with you that Middlethorpe Primary is a good school.

We were impressed by your good behaviour and how well you work with each other in lessons. We know you enjoy school because you told us so. The school council is doing a good job for the rest of the school, for example in asking Mr Holbrook for play equipment for the playground.

We think that you are taught well and particularly liked the science lessons in Class 1 and Class 2. We know from looking at your books and seeing you in lessons that you try hard and that your work is good. In fact the work of older pupils in science is well above average. Well done to you all!

Mr Holbrook and the other teachers take care of you well, and we know you feel confident that you can talk to them when you have a problem.

To make your work even better, we have asked Mr Holbrook and the teachers to help you improve your writing by giving you the chance to write longer pieces of work in lessons such as history and geography. We have also asked him to think of ways to make sure that the work in the infants is as interesting for the boys as it is for the girls.

Thank you once again. We enjoyed our visit to your school. Keep trying with your writing.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Herring

Lead Inspector