



Horncastle Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120507
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280831
Inspection dates 15 December 2005 to 16 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Geof Timms LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bowl Alley Lane
School category	Community		LN9 5EH
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01507522662
Number on roll	545	Fax number	01507523657
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Colin Adams
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Andrew Craven

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Horncastle Community Primary School is larger than average and serves the town and the surrounding area. An above average proportion of children are entitled to free school meals. Almost all children are White British, with a small number from other minority ethnic backgrounds. A few children are at an early stage of learning English, including a number who speak Bengali at home. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below average, although the number of statements of special educational need entitling children to extra support is normal for a school of this size. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly typical given their ages, although in recent years children's skills in speech and communication, and in their personal and social development, have been lower than those typically found.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Horncastle Community Primary School is an outstanding school and provides its children with an excellent education, enabling them to reach very high standards by the time they leave. The inspection confirms the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, and agrees that the priorities recognised in the improvement planning are the right ones to help take the school forward. The new senior leadership team is already having a very positive impact on provision, and the headteacher provides outstanding leadership. The standards achieved are very high by the time children leave the school. This is due to consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching. Children have excellent attitudes towards their learning, and their personal development is outstanding. They are particularly aware of how they can improve and what is expected of them in lessons. The school provides a good curriculum, although staff know that children need more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, and to use information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. Children have an outstanding start to their education in the Nursery class. The priority is to ensure that children gain the skills and attitudes necessary for their future learning and the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is very effective in doing this. The improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Given the standards achieved, and the amount of money spent per pupil, the school provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of the use of ICT in other subjects. - Provide more opportunities for children to develop their problem-solving skills through mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Overall, the achievement and standards evident by the time children leave the school are outstanding. The majority of the children starting in the Nursery class have attainment that is similar to that typically found nationally. However, the early assessments made by staff show a decline in children's personal, emotional and social skills, and in their speech and communication skills over the past four years. The nursery staff place a correct and very effective emphasis on addressing these weaknesses and this helps prepare children very well for the next stage in their education. Children in the Reception classes make good progress and the majority achieve the levels expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, children continue to make very good progress and they achieve high standards by the end of Year 2. This is due to some very high quality teaching, especially in Year 2, and the high standards achieved are reflected in the test results, which are well above average. In Years 3 to 6, children continue to make outstanding progress and they achieve very high standards by the end of Year 6. Because of the very effective teaching that children receive, particularly in Year 6, the outstanding progress that they make puts the school in the top five per cent nationally. Standards are high in English, mathematics and science. The school

has recognised a need to further develop children's problem-solving skills in mathematics and this is a priority for improvement. Most children are developing good skills in ICT, but these are yet to be used fully in different subjects, although the use of computers in art and design is often very effective. The high standards in art are especially evident in the Christmas work found in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Standards of personal development and well-being are outstanding. A striking feature of the school is how well children adopt its values and expectations and strive to do their best. Children enjoy school and attendance rates are good. Relationships are excellent and the atmosphere in the playground and in lessons is relaxed and cordial. Most children behave extremely well and they report that bullying is rare. Attitudes to learning are excellent, especially in older children, who readily rise to the challenge of demanding tasks and, as a result, achieve extremely well. Many children choose to eat healthily and participate enthusiastically in the many physical activities that the school provides. The work of the school council promotes citizenship very successfully. Children are proud to have influenced decisions about playground equipment and the nature area. They understand the hazards that young people face and know how to avoid them. Peer mediators make a very significant contribution to the quality of behaviour of the children. Opportunities to take on responsibilities and to show initiative prepare them extremely well for life as young adults. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are thoughtful and respond positively to things of beauty, such as music and works of art. They respect and care for each other because they are sensitive to the feelings of others. They act on a clear understanding of right and wrong and appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm that teaching and learning are good, although there are also examples of outstanding teaching, notably in the Nursery and in Years 2 and 6. Teachers and other adults get on very well with children. From Nursery onwards, they successfully build confidence and self-esteem, so that children join in willingly and are keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants manage occasional challenging behaviour very effectively. Consequently, almost all pupils are attentive and do their best. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They ensure that children understand the objectives of the lesson and they carefully evaluate the progress made towards achieving them. They provide a good range of interesting activities that motivate children to learn. However, there is scope for teachers to increase their use of ICT as an aid to learning across the curriculum. In the best lessons,

probing questions bring the best out of children and demanding tasks, which are extremely well matched to children's different capabilities, improve the progress that they make. Children who have learning difficulties receive good support. Staff include them fully in all that the school has to offer and they achieve well. Assessment is regular and thorough. Teachers use assessment information effectively to set challenging personal targets for all children and their marking is particularly constructive in the way that it helps children to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is rich, vibrant and brought alive through the effective use of drama, visits and visitors. Music and the arts are important aspects of the curriculum. Links between subjects are good. For example, the skills of writing are often taught through subjects such as history and science, and this is a main factor accounting for the school's very high standards. The school's priorities for the future are to provide more opportunities for solving problems in mathematics and to incorporate more use of ICT into lessons. Inspectors agree that these priorities are appropriate. The teachers base a lot of curriculum activities on the local community. In the Foundation Stage more emphasis is being put on speaking and listening activities, because this is recognised as what many of the children need most. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and a wide variety of sporting and musical activities on offer, including football, netball, sign-language, cross-country and a range of instrumental tuition. There are regular visits to the park, church, library, and further afield. Good residential visits are undertaken by Years 4 and 6. Older children benefit from the skills of secondary teachers who visit to take special science lessons, intended to extend children's skills and help prepare them for the next stage in their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision for children's care, guidance and support is outstanding. Children are extremely well supported and this enables them to achieve very high standards. Staff know children well and relationships are very positive and friendly. The way children are helped and supported to produce quality work and achieve high standards is a key component of their success. Children have a range of targets to work towards, both at group and individual level. Combined with their excellent attitudes to work, this proves a winning formula. The way teachers make it clear 'what we need to do to succeed' and 'how we can improve' during lessons, means that children are continually striving to produce a better piece of work. Procedures for child protection are firmly in place and all requirements are met. The headteacher is experienced in this area of the school's work. Due care and attention is given to ensure children's health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The current leadership and management are outstanding and this is reflected in the very high standards achieved by the time children leave the school. The headteacher provides the school with an excellent focus on attaining and maintaining high standards. This has been recognised outside the school, both by parents and by the local authority, who have made use of his expertise to support other schools. Issues raised at the last inspection have been very well dealt with and the scope for further improvement is clearly evident. There is a clear and focused vision, and high expectations for the educational direction of the school. These are shared by staff and governors. Recent changes to the management structure have already had a positive impact on provision. The leadership team is very effective in leading the school and supporting continuous improvement through performance management and the analysis of test results and other assessment data. Subject leadership is effective and staff work very well as a team, supporting and advising each other. The school's self evaluation is very accurate and has recognised important priorities for future improvement. The governing body is very well organised and led, and carries out its work efficiently through a good committee structure. Governors visit the school regularly and use this information appropriately when making judgements about, for example, spending and staffing issues. Finances are used very effectively and efficiently.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited. It was a pleasure to talk to you and to watch you all working and playing, as well as seeing you involved in the Christmas shows and your parties. We particularly enjoyed meeting some of the school council and peer mediators who told us a lot about the things you like doing at school. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things we saw. We think your school is outstanding in many ways. You are very lucky because Mr Craven, the teachers and other adults all look after and care for you well. They encourage you to be healthy and to stay safe, and ensure you have excellent opportunities to learn new things. We were impressed at how well you know what you need to do during lessons and how to judge your work as successful. You behave very well most of the time and you know what to do if there is any bullying. You enjoy looking after each other, such as when you are peer mediators, or when older children help younger ones in the playground. Your teachers are keen to make the school even better for you. We agree with them that to do this they need to help you get better at solving problems in mathematics, and to use computers and other technology in all subjects. It was good to find out that so many of you were happy at school, and that your parents said you were happy there as well. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at Horncastle!