

Hawthorn Tree School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120424
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291727
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Gaunt
Headteacher	Mr Martin Lister
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Toot Lane Boston Lincolnshire PE21 0PT
Telephone number	01205363031
Fax number	01205355037

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector over one day.

Description of the school

Hawthorn Tree School is of average size and draws its pupils mainly from the Fishtoft and Skirbeck districts of Boston. There is some difference in the levels of social and economic advantage between these districts but, overall, the picture is broadly average. The great majority of pupils are White British and, while the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low, recently it has increased due mainly to workers and their families arriving from Eastern Europe. The number of pupils with recognised learning difficulties is below average, although an above average number has a statement of special educational need. When pupils start school their attainment is average.

The school is part of an Excellence Cluster and has a partnership with the Boston Technology College Trust. In addition, it is part of Boston Networked Learning Community with the National College for School Leadership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's effectiveness is good and it provides good value for money. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are outstanding and their personal development is excellent. The school has an exceptional ethos based on strong values and high aspirations and serves its community well. Partnerships with schools and colleges are good. Parents and their children express very positive views. Many parents and grandparents volunteer their help regularly and are made welcome in school.

As a result of the headteacher's determined leadership the school has made good progress on improvements in the quality of education since the last inspection. Governors have been a good source of support and advice to the headteacher. Staff absence has been a significant feature since the last inspection. Nonetheless, the school has successfully continued to improve. Furthermore, very careful management of the school budget has been essential to raising limited funds to finance improvements. The good curriculum and assessment arrangements, in particular, have been developed effectively to ensure educational provision is targeted on pupils' achieving as well as they can. The capacity to continue improving is good.

Teaching is good across the school. The use of temporary teachers has been well managed. As a result of much professional development, the school has improved teaching. It is now mostly well planned, lively and challenging although there is some variation in how well teachers implement approaches to learning that is not monitored closely enough.

Leadership and management have been effective in maintaining the consistency of pupils' results using in-depth analysis of their performance each year, prompting initiatives where standards should be better. Standards are above average, overall. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level has improved each year since 2003. In 2006, standards in English and mathematics were above average. There are small areas of pupils' performance in both key stages where the school knows it can do better, such as in the number of pupils reaching higher levels in science, and these are being tackled. However, pupils achieve well. The school's thorough assessments point to above average standards and a better set of results in 2007. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children in Reception classes are taught well and make good progress.

Pupils are happy, confident individuals who thoroughly enjoy being at school. They contribute very effectively to the life of the school and to the community. Pupils gain a great deal of encouragement and assurance from the schools' strong support. The detailed information pupils have on progress towards their targets means they exercise significant control over how well they achieve.

The headteacher is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, and together they have led decisively on school improvement. Their monitoring of the school's work is largely systematic. Leadership roles are now being widened to involve more staff, particularly subject leaders, which is necessary to give these two senior leaders scope to focus more on what is essential to their roles.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the monitoring of teaching and learning and evaluate its effectiveness.

- Distribute more of the responsibility of leading the school, including developing the roles of subject leadership further, so that it is effective in setting a clear direction, high expectations and promoting high standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in English, mathematics and science has increased each year since 2003 and it was above average in 2006. The number reaching a higher level of attainment in English and mathematics was also above average. While an above average percentage of pupils reached the expected level in science, results were well below average at the higher level. Judging from the standards in pupils' current work, they are achieving well. Pupils are prepared well for transition to secondary education and for their future economic well-being. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties are achieving well as a result of the close monitoring of their progress and the effective support that they receive.

In Key Stage 1, standards, while remaining near to average, have been slightly more variable over time than at Key Stage 2. In 2006, the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching higher levels in literacy and numeracy was lower than expected. The teaching of writing across the school has been improved in response to this, which has raised standards. Children in Reception Year are making good progress in all the areas of learning of the Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching and a well resourced curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

All pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school. They enjoy their education enormously and their attendance is good. Pupils are friendly and they work effectively both independently and with others. They behave exceptionally well and conduct themselves wisely so they and others stay safe. Their lack of concern about bullying or other threats arises from how well their respect for others has been nurtured. Nevertheless, the school gives a high profile to its anti-bullying policy. The school values and encourages pupils to express their views and so pupils are confident in giving opinions and engaging in discussion, particularly through their active school council. The school takes considerable care to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which makes a significant contribution to their outstanding personal development. They treat the idea of a healthy lifestyle seriously and give a lot of thought to what they eat and how to keep fit. Pupils contribute exceptionally well in school and are also very actively involved in raising money for many good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In nearly every lesson activities are lively and interesting, succeeding in engaging pupils at a high level. Learning is planned in exciting ways often with emphasis on pupils using good practical and investigative approaches. The effective use of digital whiteboards adds attractive, informative visual reinforcement to teaching. In the reception class, the good expertise used in teaching phonic skills means that children are making rapid progress in language and literacy.

Lessons start well, usually with short, fast paced exercises followed by a careful introduction of the main learning objectives. In the best lessons teachers take considerable trouble to ensure pupils fully understand what is being asked of them. This gives lessons a clear sense of purpose and helps pupils work effectively. Assessment is thorough and acts as a positive influence on teacher's planning work that is challenging and well matched to pupils' different capabilities. Assessment is also used effectively to plan extra support for pupils with learning difficulties or those who could make greater progress. Teaching assistants and many regular volunteer family members provide effective support in many classrooms.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and relevant to the broad range of pupils' interests and needs. A wide choice of additional activities, during the day, after school and in the holidays, is popular with the great majority of pupils. The curriculum ensures the many pupils being taught in mixed year classes are given work that is challenging and matched to the point where they are in their learning. Rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance is the main driving force for curriculum development. This has given rise to improving provision for literacy, numeracy and science. Several initiatives to promote speaking and listening, problem solving and to help improve boys' performance in mathematics have been implemented successfully. The link with the Boston Technology Colleges Trust is being used well to develop and support science and design and technology. Considerable progress has been made to strengthen provision and raise standards in art and design, design technology and PE and games, which had been weak at the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school succeeds in promoting pupils' personal development exceptionally well, giving them the self-assurance and ambition to achieve well. Relationships with pupils are extremely positive as each is valued and their needs are well understood. Pupils' views are actively sought and they influence school improvement. Policies and procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe and healthy are well managed and implemented.

Pupils of all abilities are very well guided and supported in making progress in lessons. Targets for literacy and numeracy are used effectively to inform and support pupils on the next steps they need to achieve. Pupils make good use of their targets to check their progress. Teachers' detailed marking of their work provides pupils with valuable guidance on ways they can achieve improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is led strongly by the headteacher who has firmly established a clear direction for raising standards which is producing the desired results. The headteacher is resolute in his pursuit of improvement in the quality of education and pupils' achievement. Governors support and challenge the school well, helping to maintain a sharp focus on pupils' standards. They stay closely in touch with the work of the school, in particular by visiting frequently and from the good information available on its performance.

School improvement planning, performance management and the professional development of staff are well co-ordinated and sharply focused on raising standards. The views of parents and pupils are systematically gathered and considered. All of this ensures the school is pursuing the correct priorities and these result in it making good progress in improving further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawthorn Tree School, Boston, PE21 0PT

My visit to your school on 9 May turned out to be quite a pleasure owing much to your friendly welcome. I want to thank the Year 5 and 6 pupils I met for giving me many positive comments about your school. They really helped me form my views for the report I have written.

What I found out is that your school is good in making sure you all achieve well in lessons. I was pleased to see the standard of your working is getting higher. This is because your teachers have worked hard to make lessons interesting and challenging.

Your headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been working extremely hard to ensure the school improves in as many ways as possible. All of the staff have worked hard to support the school and I have recommended to the headteacher that they are ready to share more of the responsibility of leading the school.

Because so much work has been done on making teaching better, I have asked your headteacher to check carefully that all of the changes are working successfully in every classroom.

One area of the school's work that I think is outstanding is in how it looks after you all so carefully and gives great support to help you learn and succeed as much as possible. Your targets and how teachers mark your books stand out as ways that really help you to make good progress.

What I also found excellent was how much you enjoy school and how you behave with consideration and respect for everyone. You do a great deal to be helpful around school and for those people in need.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector