



The Gainsborough Hillcrest Community Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 120490
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291756
Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Heaptham Road
School category	Community		Gainsborough
Age range of pupils	4–7		Lincolnshire DN21 1SW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01427 613483
Number on roll (school)	154	Fax number	01427 678023
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs M Waring
		Headteacher	Mrs J E McDonald
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007	Inspection number 291756
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average infant and nursery school serving a community with increasing signs of social deprivation. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with none learning English as an additional language. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. There are five teachers who are new to the profession.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a strong shared commitment to doing its best for pupils and the local community. There are outstanding features of the school's work in provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, in the extent to which teachers enhance learning with very practical activities and in the involvement of pupils in reviewing their own learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and teaching assistants place a suitably strong emphasis upon children learning through play and practical experience. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below expected levels. Most pupils join the school with lower social and communication skills than is expected for their age, which limit their skills and understanding in most other areas of learning. Nevertheless, good teaching and good quality care, support and guidance throughout the school mean that pupils achieve well and learn to behave very well. When they leave Year 2, standards are just above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school gives pupils a good start for their ongoing education and future lives and provides good value for money.

The school's strong nurturing ethos ensures that pupils trust the adults in school and contributes very effectively to their good personal development and well-being. Pupils comment that their teachers make them feel safe. The school successfully places a very high emphasis upon enabling pupils to make healthy choices. The vast majority enjoy school enormously. They value their friends, appreciate the help adults give them and particularly enjoy using computers and receiving stickers. Thanks to the school's close work with parents and carers, the rate of attendance has improved steadily over recent years and is now good. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and manage pupils' behaviour very sensitively. Consequently, pupils behave very well in most lessons. They know their ideas are valued and respond to opportunities to take responsibility with impressive levels of confidence and maturity. Teachers keep detailed records of how well pupils are doing. They make good use of this information to modify work to suit varying needs within their class. Involving pupils in deciding how well they or their peers are doing is a strength of the school.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher skilfully promotes effective teamwork, so staff work well together and want the school's continued improvement. School self-evaluation systems are good. Senior staff give teachers useful feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching, but subject leaders who are new to the profession do not do this. Senior staff hold a wealth of information about how well pupils are doing. This is shared with staff and contributes to the very good planning to modify work for different groups. However, the information is not collected together in a format that helps senior staff to identify and analyse trends or to anticipate results and so take even earlier constructive action. Since the previous inspection there have been several significant improvements. For example, the curriculum is now good, providing many more opportunities for enhancing pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Personal development is now good because pupils have plenty of opportunities to take responsibility and show

initiative. The rate of attendance is much improved. These developments and the school's overall track record show that it has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Organise information about pupils' progress so that it is easier to analyse trends in achievement and take earlier action.
- Ensure that subject leaders increase their leadership roles, including using a wider range of methods to check the strengths and development areas for their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Consequently, they join Year 1 close to expected levels in most areas of learning. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Over recent years standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been consistently just above average. This was true of the results in national assessments in 2006, but results had fallen slightly in reading. The school successfully enables more pupils to reach the higher Level 3 in all three areas than is typical. Pupils who find learning difficult achieve well in relation to their starting points and make good progress. The school has accurately identified that pupils of average ability do not always make as much progress as other groups, especially in reading. As a result, teachers are already planning more precisely to support these pupils and current provision is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school; they proudly explain what they have learned and how they are rewarded. They behave well around school and respond really well to their teachers in lessons. Their enjoyment of school contributes significantly to their achievement. At the heart of the school's work is its commitment to developing responsible citizens who respect each other, and consequently pupils' social and moral development is excellent. The pupils really do strive to 'do the right thing'. Pupils' spiritual awareness is good; their cultural awareness is sound and developing well, despite many having a rather restricted view of the world. Pupils relish taking responsibility. This helps them to build the skills they will need when they are adults and enables them to make an extremely important contribution to the school community. They have an excellent level of knowledge about the need to eat healthily and keep fit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

As a result of close staff teamwork, pupils receive entirely consistent messages about what is expected of them, and they pay close attention in lessons. Pupils' efforts and achievements are identified and celebrated, so they know what they have done well. Involving pupils in checking and sharing their own learning is exemplary. This makes a significant contribution to girls and boys of all abilities having such positive attitudes to learning. Teachers keep copious records of pupils' learning and use these well in planning. They skilfully adjust questions to provide just the right level of challenge for different pupils. On occasions, the pace of part of a lesson slows or teachers do not ask average attaining pupils as many questions as higher attaining pupils or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. All teachers are adept at using a good variety of teaching approaches to keep pupils alert and interested, including plenty of physical activity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Activities have been developed and improved to provide a highly practical curriculum, relevant to the needs and interests of pupils. There is a good range of stimulating learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage; providing them with a positive start to their education. Much improved opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills help pupils learn effectively in a wide range of lessons. Pupils with particular educational needs have well organised individual education plans and this helps them to make good progress. Teachers are conscious of the need to broaden pupils' experiences of the world around them, and seize appropriate opportunities to do so. However, the range of visitors to the school and visits to interesting places is limited, as are the opportunities for the pupils to experience out-of-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of pastoral care and support is good because there is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each individual pupil. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and have confidence that adults will help them should problems arise. Teachers and classroom assistants know the pupils and many of their families well. They ensure the school is a secure and inviting place in which to learn. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and understood by all staff. The school has developed very constructive practices for checking pupils' learning, and teachers use these effectively to guide pupils' progress. However, procedures for recording this information and then checking and tracking progress are time-consuming and cumbersome. This makes it hard for senior staff to ensure that targets are as sharp as

possible. The school works closely with parents to ensure that pupils who need extra help receive the necessary support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads her team with a strong commitment to the school's motto, 'Aim High and Achieve!' Staff share a determination to continually seek to raise standards and achievement while giving pupils a rewarding and enriching experience. This is a school where everyone pulls together to serve its community and minimise the impact of any potential barriers to learning. As a result, equal opportunities for pupils are promoted extremely well. The Foundation Stage is managed well, taking full account of the latest guidance for good quality provision for young children.

While holding a great deal of information about pupils' skills and achievements, which is used well on a day to day basis, the information is not in an easily accessible format for analysing trends in attainment and progress. Consequently, senior staff do not always anticipate results as quickly as possible. The headteacher and deputy headteacher give staff a helpful review of what has worked well and what could be developed further when they observe lessons. This role is not shared by subject leaders because they are relatively new to teaching, but they are beginning to check the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Governors have a good understanding of the school and its needs. They are diligent in checking the work of the school and keep conscientious records of visits to check what is working well in classes.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	2

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.

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	1
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

18 February 2007

Dear Children

Gainsborough Hillcrest Infant and Nursery School, Heapham Road, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire,
DN21 1SW

We enjoyed meeting you just before half-term. Thank you for being so friendly and happy to talk with us. We should like to say a special thank you to the children in the nursery for the delicious biscuits they gave us; also a special thank you to the children who came to talk to us in the library or Mrs McDonald's office. We agree with you and your families and think that you go to a good school. Here are some of the good things about your school:

- you all make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- you behave very well in lessons and when you have special jobs to do you are extraordinarily grown up in the way you behave.
- you are extremely good at letting your teachers know what you have learned and what you still need help with.
- all the adults in school care about you a great deal and they work closely together to make sure you feel safe and secure.
- you have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and you love being active and taking plenty of exercise.
- your teachers understand how much you enjoy learning through doing things and they give you plenty of interesting activities to help you learn.
- Mrs McDonald, Mr McKenzie and the governors all want the best for you and they help the teachers to keep helping you.

We know everybody in the school wants to keep making your school even better. Mrs McDonald and the teachers work very hard to keep lots of information about how well you are doing. We have asked them to find a way of making this job a bit easier for them. We have asked the teachers to help Mrs McDonald and Mr McKenzie by thinking of more ways to find out what is working well in particular subjects, and what they might do to make things even better.

Thank you again for being so welcoming and we wish you well in the future.

Jill Bavin (Lead Inspector) and Roger Brown