



Halton Holegate CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120573
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291787
Inspection dates 14–15 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Brennan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Halton Holegate, Halton Holegate
Age range of pupils	4–11		Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 5PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01790 752575
Number on roll (school)	54	Fax number	01790 754786
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr. John White
		Headteacher	Mrs. Emma Hadley
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small school draws pupils from the village of Halton Hologate and the surrounding area which is largely rural. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils either leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time is very high. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is above average. Only a handful of children start in Reception in any one year. Few join the school with skills and abilities above the usual level so that attainment on entry overall is below the average. Since the last inspection there have been many changes of staffing, including a succession of headteachers/acting headteachers. The present headteacher has been in post for just over eighteen months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

A governor who said, 'This school has come a long way in short time,' has got it right. Following a turbulent period of staff change in which standards declined, the school has now improved. The staffing situation has stabilised and standards have risen in each of the last two years. They are currently above average. Pupils achieve well both academically and personally in this good school, which provides good value for money. Much of the recent upturn is due to the ambition and vigour of the headteacher. On appointment, she wasted no time in accurately summing up strengths and weaknesses in the school. She enlisted the help of the local authority and put in place widespread and beneficial changes. These included successful training to help governors and other staff to become effective leaders. Governors are especially proactive and training for coordinators has given them the confidence and ability to lead their subjects well. The good quality of leadership has in turn led to key improvements in teaching and learning. Planning and assessment procedures have been overhauled so that lessons have purpose and work is well suited to pupils' differing needs. The good standard of teaching is enabling pupils to progress well. However, children in Reception make satisfactory progress because they do not do enough well planned learning outdoors. Efforts to improve a longstanding weakness in writing have worked well, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers here give pupils ample opportunities to draft and craft their work over a series of lessons and set them imaginative tasks. It is no coincidence that many older pupils say writing is one of their favourite subjects. The school has yet to ensure that pupils use their mathematics and computing skills with the same degree of interest when they are studying other subjects. Pupils' personal development is good. A newly established school council gives pupils a say in school, for example in choosing new play equipment. The widespread use of 'buddies' in which older pupils help younger ones has brought this family school even closer together. Pupils work hard, behave well and get on well with each other. They enjoy school as reflected in their good attendance. Assessment procedures have been used well to help pupils take more responsibility for their own learning. Most know what it is they need to do to improve. Pupils know about healthy living. Despite this, several older pupils remain to be convinced to eat healthily at break time. Robust procedures underpin the school's caring attitude and as a result care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle in quickly. Those who have learning difficulties are given prompt and sensitive help and progress well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide Reception children with better and more frequent opportunities to learn outdoors
- Ensure that pupils' skills in mathematics and computing are used in thought provoking ways when studying other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Following the last inspection standards declined, reaching a low point in 2004 when national tests results in Year 6 were well below average. Results recovered dramatically in 2005 and were average. This upward trend has continued. Work seen in books and the school's latest assessments show that standards are now above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving well towards challenging targets. In particular, higher attaining pupils are progressing at a good rate which is quicker than previously. However, the rate of progress is not yet consistent. Children in Reception achieve well in learning to write but overall achievement is satisfactory because of the lack of good quality outdoor learning. In particular this hampers progress in physical development. Most Reception children join Year 1 having attained the expected goals for the end of Reception, although relatively few go beyond these. Good momentum is maintained through Years 1 and 2. Pupils progress steadily through Years 3 and 4 before accelerating rapidly through Years 5 and 6. Achievement here is particularly strong because the teaching is very effective. Pupils who have learning difficulties also achieve well and many go on to reach expected levels by the time they leave the school. Overall, the standards attained in basic literacy and numeracy skills provide a firm basis for pupils' future economic well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and they leave school well prepared for the next stages of education. They are confident and mature in their thoughts. Older pupils often express these well in writing. Pupils know what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. They work hard to meet the school's increasingly high expectations and say they like a 'challenge.' They know of the importance of eating healthily and of taking exercise. However, whilst fruit prevails at break time for younger pupils, several older pupils still eat snacks such as crisps. The rather cramped yard makes it hard for pupils to be fully active when the field is unfit for use. Nevertheless, pupils use play equipment well and play very amiably with each other. An effective school council gives pupils a strong voice in the school and the widespread use of 'buddies' adds to pupils' responsibilities and, as one boy said, helps all 'bond' together. Pupils play a prominent part in the local community and respect and understand cultural difference. This is indicative of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Revamped planning systems and accurate assessment of pupils guide their learning well. They are the key reasons why teaching and learning are good. For the most part work is matched to pupils' differing needs well. However, outdoor learning in Reception is not clearly described and teaching lacks purpose. Success criteria for lessons are invariably shared with pupils who know exactly what they need to do to succeed. Ends of lessons are used effectively to help pupils reflect on success and, on occasion, to 'mark' their own work. Lessons, especially in writing, build well over time. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 in particular succeeds in bringing learning to life, for example as pupils write stories that outline a series of problems and resolutions for their younger 'buddies'. This fosters enjoyment and promotes excellence. This is also the case in Years 1 and 2 where pupils, for example, often enjoy active counting sessions outdoors. However, interesting learning is not as prominent in Years 3 and 4 where tasks in some subjects can be more mundane. Beneficial partnerships are forged with teaching assistants. Careful deployment ensures that they help teachers manage the wide ability spread in their classes and makes sure that help is on hand for those pupils who need it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Extensive visits out of school and the high take up of clubs adds much to pupils' enjoyment of the school. Events such as a 'Health Week' contribute well to pupils' personal development. Efforts to help pupils develop a positive attitude to writing are working well because in history and several other subjects pupils are asked to write in imaginative and thought provoking ways. This represents the highpoint of an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Linkages between mathematics and computing and the rest of the curriculum are not yet as well defined so learning is not as stimulating. Consequently pupils do not use mathematical and computing skills in thought provoking ways when studying other subjects. The curriculum for Reception children is practically based but learning outdoors does not form a prominent enough part of pupils' everyday learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'My son settled very well, made new friends and comes home full of what he has learnt.' This parent's comments sums up the school's sensitive approach to helping the regular new arrivals settle quickly into school and minimising disruption to learning. The family nature of the school ensures staff know pupils well; they provide good academic and personal guidance. Improved assessment procedures guide prompt intervention and the targeting of extra help for pupils who need it. This extends to helping a few pupils

make the best use of play and lunchtimes. Robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety. Child protection procedures reflect recently updated guidelines. However, midday staff are not fully aware of the details of some safety guidelines. Despite this standards of care offered by the school are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

'The school has developed well under the headteacher's leadership.' This comment made by a parent and echoed by several others accurately sums up the energy and ambition that underpins the good leadership of the headteacher. A close partnership with the local education authority has been used well as a springboard to bring about a raft of changes. A collegiate approach has created a good sense of teamwork. The school works well with parents who have every confidence in the school. Until recently efforts at developing leadership qualities in other staff have met with mixed success but their involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme has led to significant improvements. Subject coordinators have gained in confidence and expertise and have taken control and responsibility for their subjects. Governors have determinedly set about playing a full part in the life of the school. They monitor performance closely, ask searching questions and are influential in decision making. Overall therefore, leadership and management are good. A simple but effective system for tracking progress has helped identify shortcomings, for example in pupils' writing, which have been tackled successfully. Monitoring is well structured so that the school has a good insight into its strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for the future are well targeted and well planned. The increased breadth in leadership and substantial improvement demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

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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	3
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?	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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	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

18 September 2006 Dear children Halton Hologate C of E Primary School, Station Road, Halton Hologate, Spilsby. Lincolnshire PE23 5PB Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. It was like visiting one big happy family. I would like to share with you what I thought about your school. The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make school interesting. You too play your part in making this a good school. The school council has lots of good ideas. You behave really well and are very helpful to each other. Several children who joined the school in the recent past told me how you had helped them settle into school easily. The playground is bit small but I could see that you still played well and tried to use play equipment properly. You know a lot about how to eat healthily but some older children are still eating snacks such as crisps at playtime. You could help the school in its efforts to help you stay healthy by looking again at what you bring to school to eat. The school has put lot of thought into setting you interesting writing tasks to do. Children in Years 5 and 6 in particular, write in many imaginative ways. I have asked the school to help you use your mathematical and computing skills in ways that are equally as creative. I really like the classroom for Reception children but you should be able to do more of your lessons outside. I have asked the school to look again at how Reception children can learn more outside of the classroom. Thank you once again for your welcome. Good luck in the future. John Brennan Lead inspector