



# The Horncastle St Lawrence School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 120757  
**Local Authority** LINCOLNSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 291846  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Lemon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Bowl Alley Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Horncastle
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16		Lincolnshire LN9 5EJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01507 522563
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	125	<b>Fax number</b>	01507 522974
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs P Crisp-Beard
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002		

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<b>Age group</b> 5–16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1–2 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 291846
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The very large majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has for a number of years admitted pupils who have, besides or in addition to their moderate learning difficulties, a range of other more complex needs. Small numbers have visual and hearing impairments, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism, and speech and communication difficulties. A few have physical disabilities. Pupils come from across Lincolnshire. A few pupils board at the school during the week in term time. The number of pupils joining or leaving school other than at the usual time is high due to the seasonal nature of local employment and the proximity of a Royal Air Force base. All of the pupils are White British.

The school is a Football Association Charter School and is part of the Skegness Sports Partnership. The school is also in a local science partnership and it has Healthy School Status. Its rural studies course includes a small farm on site and courses are provided for Key Stage 4 pupils attending the local secondary school. Currently the school, along with Boston College, is trialling post-16 provision. The students involved are ex-pupils and are registered with Boston College.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Effectiveness is satisfactory, which is slightly less than the school's evaluation of itself that it is good. While the school demonstrates a number of strengths, it has not reached the point where a key aspect of effectiveness, pupils' achievement, can be judged to be good. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Better progress has been hindered by limitations in how the school tracks pupils' performance and assesses their progress. Pupils are doing reasonably well in gaining accreditation from many award bearing courses. However, from the limited knowledge of their performance, it is not clear to teachers how much more pupils might achieve. Equally, there are subjects where pupils are making good progress in lessons but are not achieving well overall. This is because, for example, there is no accredited course offered in art and the one followed in science is not challenging enough. These matters can be easily resolved with effective tracking of performance and regular assessment of progress. Systems are being implemented to do this but are not yet operating to their full effect.

Another consequence of this is that lessons, although pupils often find them enjoyable, are taught no better than satisfactorily. This is because the learning objectives chosen are not necessarily well founded on a good knowledge of what pupils know and can do and what next they need to learn. Best effect is not always gained from the good curriculum. However, in terms of the essential lessons of looking after themselves, pupils learn well about healthy lifestyles and their own and others' safety. Provision for sensory impaired pupils and those with more complex learning difficulties is being implemented effectively. The curriculum also ensures, especially with its strong vocational content, that pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. The quality and management of the small farm is outstanding and has a considerable impact on pupils' interest and motivation to learn. While the school succeeds only moderately in supporting pupils' academic progress, it provides effective support and guidance that lead to good personal development and successful transition into employment, training or further education.

Leadership and management set a clear direction and high expectations in relation to promoting pupils' personal development through good quality care, support and guidance. They have been less confident and more hesitant in driving forward an agenda of raising achievement. The means for doing so are taking shape. Overall school self-evaluation is satisfactory. Governors have satisfactorily supported the school's direction but, while their commitment and determination are strong, the limited information on pupils' achievement means they have not asked the probing questions needed.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 2**

The well led and managed boarding provision makes a significant contribution to the good personal development of the few pupils staying at school during the week. Residential programmes are planned well, as are improvements to the accommodation

in particular. All of the arrangements for safeguarding boarders are in place. The outcomes of the recent social care inspection were positive and the few recommendations made have all been acted upon. Progress on the recommendations is satisfactory.

In residential hours, boarders are encouraged effectively to develop independence skills. They value their boarding experience, saying there is plenty to do and much to enjoy. The fact that other pupils stay after school and join in activities with boarders strengthens already good links with school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Finalise the implementation of the scheme for tracking pupils' performance so that rigorous analysis of progress can take place.
- Put into place consistent procedures for regular assessment of pupils' progress and use the information gained effectively to plan lessons.
- Provide accredited courses that reflect the achievements of pupils in rural science and art.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards pupils attain, compared with what is expected for their age, are very low as a result of learning difficulties. However, because of the overall sound quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning, achievement across the school is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 4 who are entered for each award bearing course, succeed at least reasonably well. Most achieved the Entry Level Certificate's highest level in mathematics and information and communication technology. Nearly all did so in English. Pupils gain similar results in a host of vocationally based accredited courses. There are pockets of good achievement. In art, where teaching is expert and challenging, progress in lessons is good, although this has not been consistent because of staff absence and the lack of an accredited course. Good achievement in aspects of rural studies is the result of the superb resources of the school's small farm. Opportunities for even better achievement are missed, however, because many pupils could cope with greater challenges in the horticultural course. Results indicate girls perform much better than boys, although in the limited analysis of pupils' performance carried out, this has not been picked up by the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils use well the many opportunities provided to make a positive contribution. The school council is an increasingly influential forum for them to play a part in the life of the school. They enthusiastically raise funds for charities and work well helping others.

Pupils behave well and take their responsibilities seriously. They relate well to each other and, as they say, bullying is rare but dealt with very effectively by staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is developed successfully through the curriculum and other activities. Art, music and drama enrich their cultural experiences as does exploring foods from other cultures, which they prepare in cookery lessons. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe. The good opportunity for older pupils to practise independent travel builds their self-confidence. They stay fit and healthy, helped by the schools' strong emphasis on sports and physical education. Equally, the high quality food served at lunch time and the popular breakfast club are greatly appreciated by pupils.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Despite lessons across the school often being lively and enjoyable for pupils, the success of learning does not always match these positive qualities. This is because, in planning lessons, pupils' work is not based on thorough enough assessment of what they have learnt and what they next need to learn. The rapport between pupils and staff is good, and staff do much to support each pupil. However, this is not always focused enough on the quality of learning for pupils to make any more than satisfactory progress. Lessons start with sharing the main objective with the class. However, with assessment procedures that are only satisfactory, there can be little confidence that the objectives always match pupils' learning needs or that the work planned is appropriately challenging.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The range of subjects and activities is good. The rich variety of additional experiences brought through sports, residential trips and the many visitors to the school adds to pupils' enjoyment. The well planned curriculum is diverse and interesting and focuses appropriately on the different needs of individual pupils within the school. For example, provision for sensory impaired pupils is being developed effectively, as is a discrete programme for speech, language and communication. The programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship is good in promoting healthy lifestyles and personal safety. Particular strengths are to be found in provision for art and design and in rural studies. The latter is based on the excellent resources of the school's small farm, which the local secondary school uses to offer its pupils a rural science course. However, the lack of good opportunities for St Lawrence pupils to gain all the accreditation they could lessens some of the impact of these subjects.

The school has developed a good and appropriate emphasis on vocational education by providing a broad range of accredited work related courses. Strong links with local businesses and a careers service give pupils considerable opportunities to learn about

the workplace and gain work experience. In terms of their future economic well-being, the curriculum prepares pupils well for moving into employment, training or further education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of all pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robustly in place. Effective partnerships with outside agencies mean vulnerable pupils are well supported. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good and this has had a positive effect on their behaviour and attendance. The check kept on pupils' academic progress is not as rigorous. Pupils' progress is beginning to be tracked more closely but such tracking is not at a point where their academic performance is well understood. As a result, lesson planning and target setting at school and individual pupil level are improving but still somewhat restricted. However, achievement in all areas of school life is positively celebrated and this boosts pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Good support and guidance, through effective preparation for leaving school, mean pupils make a successful transition to the next stage of their lives.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is some good leadership at senior management level and across the school, arising from the clear direction and high expectations that promote pupils' good personal development. There has also been a good start made to implementing provision for pupils with sensory impairments and speech and language difficulties, with some good assessment practice emerging in the latter. Many aspects of pupils' personal development are closely monitored and this has led to improved behaviour, attendance and a big reduction in exclusions. This effective practice is not mirrored in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. Here, as a result, making improvements and developing more effective teaching and learning are less impressive. The system for tracking pupils' performance is being put in place and currently provides the school with some information collected at a few points during the year. The system is not yet being fully used to support better lesson planning. Nevertheless, the school knows its priorities for development. These are set out in a reasonable plan of action, although success criteria are expressed vaguely. The capacity for improvement and the value for money provided are satisfactory.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

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

5 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Horncastle St Lawrence School, Bowl Alley Lane, Horncastle, Lincolnshire. LN9 5EJ

Many thanks for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We were really pleased to see how happy you all are at school and how much you are enjoying your work.

These are the things we found best about your school

- All of the staff are working hard to support you and are doing a good job in getting you ready for leaving school and moving on successfully.
- We thought the activities you are given to do are good, especially sports and your opportunities to learn about the world of work.
- You are all making good progress in your personal development, becoming independent and learning to be healthy and safe, but importantly being helpful to others.
- We were pleased to see and hear that you enjoy lessons and show willingness to work hard.
- Among many things that we thought were good, we were most impressed by the work you are doing around the small farm and also in art lessons.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do to improve your school

- We said they should finish off as soon as possible the work they have started on measuring your progress so they can see accurately how well you are doing.
- We have asked them to make sure your work is regularly assessed to help them plan your activities more effectively.
- We have said the horticultural course in science should be set at a higher level and that an accredited course in art should be provided.

We wish you all well and every success for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector