



Hickling First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121043
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291973
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Cheryl Thompson

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

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| Type of school | First | School address | The Street |
| School category | Voluntary controlled | | Hickling, Hickling |
| Age range of pupils | 4–8 | | Norwich, Norfolk NR12 0XX |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01692598355 |
| Number on roll (school) | 56 | Fax number | 01692598355 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr. John Harrison |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs. Patricia Warren |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected | | |

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|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Hickling First is a very small school. It serves Hickling, Sea Palling and other local villages. All children are white British and a much lower proportion than average is eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is usually in the average to below average range. The number of children identified as having learning difficulties is slightly above average. In 2007 the school will become an infant school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hickling First is a good school where children make good progress academically as well as in their personal development. It provides good value for money. The school judged its effectiveness to be satisfactory but had been over-cautious in judging its achievements. Parents have many good things to say about their children's education and the children say they love coming to school. The older children behave well and are keen to learn. Children develop good skills such as reading and writing which will help them in their future education. The key features to the school's success are the headteacher's clear vision and the very strong team spirit among staff. The headteacher has a very good idea of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve. Indeed, since her appointment in January 2005, much of the improvement since the last inspection has happened and standards have risen to above average levels. The capacity for further improvement is good. Governors are very supportive of the school and have developed their roles but are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable about the data collected by the school to act as a critical friend and question if the school can do even better. Small numbers of children take the Year 2 national tests which makes data for just one year unreliable. Over time though, standards are broadly average. In the past two years there has been noticeable improvement especially in reading and writing. Standards in Year 3 are above average in reading and writing and around average in mathematics. The school recognises that more needs to be done to improve standards in mathematics and writing and has good plans to do this. The inspection has also highlighted two areas where the school can do even better. A good start has been made on linking other subjects to give meaningful reasons for writing but this is not yet tightly planned. The school is not teaching phonics (letter sounds) as effectively as they could. The school has a good system for checking how well children make progress through the school. This system helps make sure that, from their starting points, children of all abilities achieve well. Their good achievement is because teachers match work to their abilities and skilled help is provided for children who find learning difficult. Teaching and learning are good across the school. Both classes have job-share arrangements and the part-time teachers give generously of their time to make sure that there is a seamless education for their classes. Their good planning ensures children benefit from their particular talents, for example in science, physical education and music. Within a framework of good relationships, teachers manage their classes well but on occasions, a small number of the younger children who misbehave or waste time are not dealt with firmly and consequently continue to test the boundaries. Proficient classroom assistants play an important part in school life by providing good support in lessons. Classroom assistants also make a crucial contribution to the good provision for Reception children by providing very good pastoral care and support for small group work. Children say they feel safe in school and are very confident that any adult in the school will help them should they have any worries.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in writing and mathematics by formalising opportunities for writing in other subjects.
- Developing the teaching of phonics and rigorously

implementing the steps in the school's development plan to raise standards in mathematics. - Improve behaviour of a few of the younger children by setting consistently high expectations for them to settle to work and do as they are asked. - Ensure governors develop an understanding of school assessment data so that they can act as a critical friend and hold the school to account for its performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are about average and achievement is good. Children of all abilities achieve well as they move through the school. Children make good progress in Reception, especially in learning to work together and concentrate on tasks for a reasonable time. National data for the past years shows that at the end of their Reception year, children's attainment ranges from average to below that typical for the age group, especially in the areas of personal development and communication, language and literacy. Over time, standards attained in Year 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average but have risen in the past two years. In 2005, standards were exceptionally high and in 2006 continued to be above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows standards in Year 3 are above average in writing and reading and average in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A particularly strong feature is the successful focus on developing their awareness of cultures other than their own. When they start in Reception, many children find it difficult to socialise well with others, to share and take turns and do what is asked of them. As they move through the school, they learn to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and become well behaved and responsible young people with good attitudes to learning. The school council members take their responsibilities seriously and know that they have a voice in the school. Children have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life style and stay safe through a good programme of personal, social and health education and a good range of visits and visitors. The excellent range of play equipment helps children to keep fit and active on the school field at playtimes. Children's involvement in the 'Steppers Scheme' for walking to school and involvement in the Eco project has given them a good understanding of the need for sustainability and recycling. The school has worked very hard to promote good attendance by letting parents know how holidays in term time affect their child's education. Currently, attendance is average and a good improvement on the low levels in previous years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because teachers make their lessons lively and relevant. For example, Year 1 children were keen to write about 'their day' because their teacher had taken photographs of them involved in various activities for them to use as illustrations. Letter sounds are taught thoroughly and teachers are encouraging children to blend these together to help them spell, however, they are not actually teaching them the skill of how to do this. Teachers keep good records of children's achievements and plan their lessons to build on what they already know. Teachers also use their records and good knowledge of individuals to note learning difficulties and seek advice if necessary. Consequently, children with learning difficulties are soon identified and appropriate support given to help them make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched well through an interesting range of visits and visitors. Children speak enthusiastically about the good range of clubs and sporting activities they take part in. These initiatives and clubs provide well for children's personal development. The school has correctly identified the need to more formally make its links between subjects such as history and writing in curriculum plans to make learning even more interesting and relevant and to improve standards in writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. It provides excellent pastoral care because all children are known well by all staff. Any signs of unhappiness are noted quickly. Parents are very happy with the care provided by the school. Suitable child protection procedures are in place and the necessary checks on all adults working with the children have been carried out. Supervision at playtimes is very good. Teachers and classroom assistants manage their classes well but in spite of this there is a small number of younger children who test the boundaries and the school's rewards and sanctions are not robust enough to deal with this. The school tracks children's academic progress thoroughly and, although the system is relatively new, staff are using it effectively to make sure children make good progress. The system for setting targets for groups and individuals is in the early stages of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been in post for eighteen months and even though she has only two days per week when she is not teaching, she has brought about considerable improvements. In her role as special educational needs co-ordinator, she makes good use of outside specialists to provide advice. School improvement planning is good because it is based on the headteacher's very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. It is comprehensive and prioritised to keep children's achievement at the forefront. Within the time available to the headteacher and part-time staff, the work of the school is monitored effectively and action is taken where needed. For example, new information communication and technology (ICT) equipment has been purchased, including a good number of laptop computers, to replace outdated equipment. The school has a budget surplus for which it is planned to buy interactive whiteboards after the remodelling and building work is completed to make the school an infant school. The headteacher has been proactive in developing strong, working links with other small local schools. These links are beneficial to all staff because of the opportunity to share in professional development courses.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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

| | |
|---|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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

21 September 2006 Dear Children Hickling First School, The Street, Hickling, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 0XX Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed having lunch with you and was pleased to hear that you enjoy school and going to the clubs. You have learned a lot about the right sort of foods to eat and that exercise is important. I was really impressed with how active you are on the field at playtimes. Taking part in the Eco project and walking to school project has helped you learn a lot about recycling and sustainability. It was good to see you recycling the remains of your fruit and vegetables at snack time. I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school. You are making good progress because your teachers work hard to make sure you are given the right sort of interesting work. Your behaviour improves as you get older and it is good but there are just a few of you who do not always behave as well as you should. You could help by doing as you are asked without any fuss. Your headteacher is doing a good job running the school and I have asked her to do some things to make it even better. I have asked her to make sure you can do more writing in subjects like history and science and that teachers teach the younger children to put letter sounds together to help them spell better. The headteacher is already planning to give you more practice with solving problems in mathematics. I have asked the governors of your school to learn some more about how you do in the Year 2 tests. Thank you again for your helpfulness. All good wishes, Cheryl Thompson Lead inspector