

Hemswell Cliff Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120491
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	301776
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gill Broadbent

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	87
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Dean
Headteacher	Mrs B Riddle
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2001
School address	Capper Road Hemswell Cliff Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 5XS
Telephone number	01427 668383
Fax number	01427 668383

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves local villages and declining numbers of families from the armed services. The number of pupils who have started school has varied significantly each year from 8 to 15. Children's skills vary on entry but are usually similar to those expected nationally. There is high mobility with many pupils joining and leaving school throughout the year. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a few from mixed race families. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties. The school appointed a new headteacher in September 2006 following four years of turbulent leadership and management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is improving rapidly under the strong leadership and management of the headteacher. The school assesses its effectiveness accurately. Financial difficulties and frequent changes of leadership from 2002 to 2006 resulted in a gradual fall in standards and achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school but not in science. By 2006, standards and achievement at the end of Year 6 were above average in science but below average in English and mathematics and very low in writing. This worrying trend was swiftly identified by the head teacher. Together with the support of governors and staff, urgent action was taken to halt the decline successfully. As a result standards and achievement are now satisfactory throughout the school and the rate of pupils' progress is accelerating. Provision and standards in the Reception Class are satisfactory.

The headteacher has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school's development and pupils' achievement. This is shared by the new governing body and by staff with subject responsibilities. Improvements needed that were identified in the inspection report of 2001 have been achieved rapidly since September 2006. Rigorous, robust quality assurance procedures and tracking individual pupil's progress have been introduced. Governors have established sound structures for their work. They have almost eradicated the deficit budget. But, they need to develop their role as critical friends to contribute effectively to school self-evaluation. New subject leaders have a good grasp of the standards and achievement in each subject. They are well placed to develop their skills to contribute more effectively to school improvement. This demonstrates that the leadership and management team are satisfactory and have a sound capacity to secure further improvements. The majority of parents are very supportive of the improvements made to the quality of their children's education. A small minority are concerned by changes in staff and staffing levels. The governing body are well aware of these concerns and are dealing with them appropriately.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. The pupils are delightful and a strength of the school. They behave well, attendance is good and their positive attitudes show they enjoy learning especially in science. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory because the school consistently provides an encouraging learning environment and ensures pupils are well cared for. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They develop healthy lifestyles and have been instrumental in the introduction of healthy, hot school meals. They take advantage of the sports and clubs on offer such as drama and cross stitch. The pupils' voice is heard satisfactorily through the school council. This helps pupils to make a sound contribution to the school community. A good contribution is made to the wider community through strong links with the Royal Air Force. Assemblies and religious education ensure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They are soundly prepared for their future lives and economic well-being through the standards they achieve and through working in teams during industry days. But the promotion of racial equality and their understanding of other cultures are less well developed to prepare them for life in multi-cultural Britain.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, especially in writing by improving the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils, especially the more able, reach challenging targets.
- Promote racial equality to effectively prepare pupils for their life in multi-cultural Britain.

- Provide training to enable subject leaders and governors to contribute more effectively to school self evaluation and further improvements.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The new whole-school system for tracking pupils' standards, progress and achievement is ensuring that leadership and management know how well pupils are doing in each year group. Children enter the Reception Class with the skills expected for their age, except that they are not so well developed in linking letters to sounds and in creative development. They make satisfactory progress to reach the levels expected for their age by the beginning of Year 1 and some do better than this. In Years 1 to 6, the school checked pupils' attainment in September 2006, set challenging targets and tracked pupils' progress towards them rigorously. Similarly the progress pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make is carefully checked and appropriate support provided. They achieve satisfactorily. Consequently, standards and achievement are now good in science and at least satisfactory in English and mathematics. Although writing is still much weaker than reading, the gap between them is closing rapidly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are proud of the school rules they have developed with the headteacher's support. Their commitment to them is shown by the warm welcome, respect, friendliness and courtesy they show to pupils and visitors new to the school. They do their best in class and work hard. The pupils' voice is heard through the school council. This helps pupils to make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. They set up companies to sell goods at a profit to buy games for the playground. Prefects set good role models for younger pupils who aspire to be prefects in the future. Satisfactory academic standards and the development of team work through the industry week all make a sound contribution to their future lives and economic well-being. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and dealt with properly if it happens. They feel safe and secure in school and know that there is always a member of staff they can turn to for help.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are strengths in the relationships between staff and pupils which are caring and mutually respectful. The learning culture is supportive. Pupils respond to teachers' questions confidently. They say 'No one knows it all' showing how staff encourage pupils' confidence and positive attitudes to learning. A range of teaching styles, which include opportunities for pupil discussions and the use of the interactive white board, are beginning to make learning active. Experiments are well used in science which helps pupils to enjoy learning. But there is less use of physical activities and solving practical problems in other subjects to inspire pupils to do even better. Pupils know their learning targets which are shared with their parents. A new marking policy is focused on these learning targets and is

used well by teachers to help pupils improve. Planning is at its best when activities are based on an accurate knowledge of pupils' current skills, different abilities, and what they need to do next. Then progress accelerates to enable pupils, especially the more able, to reach challenging targets. However, this is not always the case especially where teachers have weaker subject knowledge, for example in teaching writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and ensures that pupils do not repeat topics in the mixed age classes. The areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are planned through an appropriate balance of activities indoors but this approach has not been extended sufficiently to the outdoor area. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the national initiative for developing excellence and enjoyment is being used to develop effective links between subjects. These provide opportunities for pupils to use their skills across all subjects including information and communication technology (ICT). Sporting activities, residential visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum satisfactorily. The school is right to introduce a systematic programme of work to enhance pupils' social and emotional development. The traditions of other cultures and religious beliefs have been introduced into assemblies. This has yet to have an impact on the promotion of racial equality and on preparing pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school fully meets the latest guidelines concerning the safeguarding of pupils. Pupils know they are well cared for. Health and safety reviews are conducted regularly. Pupils are provided with satisfactory guidance to keep themselves safe through presentations in assemblies and the travel plan which encourages safety whilst walking to school. Pupils are set challenging targets to raise expectations, standards and achievement. Teachers check and track pupils' progress towards them. This helps to ensure that those pupils who frequently change schools or who have different abilities and learning difficulties are identified swiftly. Their needs are met through the flexible use of well-focused short interventions by teachers or support staff to fill any gaps in pupil's learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties are well provided for and make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Governors and staff have been inspired by the headteacher to adopt quality assurance strategies that will help to ensure that each pupil's standards, progress and achievement are at the heart of the school's work. The headteacher, together with external consultants, closely monitor the quality of teaching and the impact that it is having on pupils' learning. The training and support provided have effectively brought about improvements. Subject leaders are fully included in school self-evaluation and improvement as they develop their new roles. The governing body are supportive and have a good strategic plan for the next five years, which includes the school's development as a children's centre. An appropriate structure of committees provides a forum for the development of policies such as the racial equality policy. However, their involvement in school self-evaluation needs to be developed so that they can act as well informed critical friends. This will help governors to make a critical evaluation of the impact of their initiatives

on the benefits for pupils and assure themselves that money is being well spent. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	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

17 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hemswell Cliff Primary School, Gainsborough DN21 5XS

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and politeness when I visited your school recently. Your parents and the school staff are right to be very proud of you. This letter is to tell you some of the important things that I found out about your school.

Your school has gone through a difficult time because of the frequent changes of headteacher. I agree with you that your new headteacher has made a big difference. Everyone has worked hard to make things better. You have played your part too by attending school regularly, being well behaved and working hard in lessons to reach your targets. So your school is satisfactory and improving rapidly. You do well in science which you really enjoy. Over the last year you have improved so that your work is right for your age and some of you do even better. Writing is still not as good as reading, but the gap is closing!

You told me how much you appreciate the new school rules that you have agreed with the headteacher. You clearly value all the sports and after school clubs too. I was impressed by how hard you work to earn the role of a prefect. You understand the responsibilities you have and set the younger pupils a good example. I'm not surprised that they want to be just like you.

- The school have agreed to help you reach higher standards and targets especially in writing.
- They have also agreed to help you understand the views and cultures of people from different backgrounds.
- The adults who lead and manage the school will check its work more closely to make sure it continues to improve.

I hope that you continue to enjoy learning when you move to your next school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Broadbent (Lead inspector/HMI)