

# The Harlaxton Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120525
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313652
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Brown

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	187
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Susan Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Dixon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Swinehill Harlaxton Grantham Lincolnshire NG32 1HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01476 561077
<b>Fax number</b>	01476590868

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than other primary schools. Most of the pupils are of White British background. There are small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the number of pupils who require extra help with their learning. The school has a Basic Skills award, Activemark, and Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school correctly evaluates its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they are keen to learn and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They and their parents value the school's welcoming and caring atmosphere. Satisfactory progress since the last inspection has resulted in good developments in the use of digital technology to stimulate pupils' writing, and this approach is becoming a strength in some classes.

Children's attainment when they start at school is typical for their age. They make steady progress in the Foundation Stage, with the majority achieving the expected goals in language development and mathematical understanding. By the end of Year 2, standards are average, and they continue to be so by the end of Year 6, and a little above. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall as most make satisfactory progress. Pupils who find learning hard make good progress thanks to the effective support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are strengths of the school. Pupils are proud of the school and delighted to report on the wealth of opportunities they get to take part in sports and other activities. Older pupils relish opportunities to take responsibility, for instance as play leaders. They are especially interested in improving the school's environmental impact. Pupils are prepared for life in an ethnically diverse society by the importance placed by the school on respect for others. However, they are unsure about some aspects of other peoples' cultures.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory as pupils make steady progress in their learning. Where it is more effective, for instance, in classes where there is more imaginative and creative use of information and communication technology, the pupils are much more engaged in the work they are given. Where it is less effective, the pace of learning is too slow and pupils become distracted and start to lose interest in their work. Staff have begun to work on improving the quality of the assessment processes in the school, but, as with other initiatives, the work is not implemented consistently. In some classes, pupils are already beginning to assess their own work realistically, but variations in marking and inconsistent guidance mean that assessment is not uniformly effective. The curriculum is improving and has good elements as more imaginative and creative aspects are being introduced, but the impact of the work is not fully embedded across all classes.

Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the work of the school, but the pace of change and improvement is too cautious. Although good ideas are implemented, and are beginning to show improvements, the impact of the work is uneven, and progress is slow. The leadership team, staff and governors have a realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness and, consequently, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

From the time they start in Nursery, children make satisfactory progress, with many doing well in their personal and social skills and in early reading and mathematical skills. However, the systems for tracking children's progress highlights that a significant proportion of children are not making the expected amount of progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development. Teaching and learning, as well as the curriculum, are satisfactory. Staff are preparing to move towards the new national framework for the Foundation Stage and recognise that improvements in assessment need to feed into their planning process. The match

of work to children's needs is not yet consistent. Children enjoy the varied activities that are on offer, but lose interest when adults do not pick up on the opportunities to support them. Leadership is satisfactory and staff take good care of the children.

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

- Refine and develop the use of assessment and marking to aid lesson planning and help raise standards.
- Accelerate the pace of change and developments at the school to raise the quality of provision.
- Create more opportunities for the pupils to broaden their appreciation and understanding of living in an ethnically and culturally diverse society.

A small proportion of the 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**

Standards at the end of Year 2 have remained around the national average for several years. They are slightly higher in reading and mathematics than writing, but the staff have begun to address this difference with a good focus on the use of digital media to stimulate pupils' interest in writing. Where this new approach is used wholeheartedly it is helping to raise standards. By the end of Year 6, standards have remained just above the national average since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and their achievements are satisfactory. There are no significant differences in progress between boys and girls, but pupils with extra learning needs who receive support make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' confidence around school arises from their good spiritual, moral and social development. They value the relationships and friendships created in school, which help them to bond socially with peers from across a wide area. From this, a strong sense of community has developed to celebrate the excitement and success of participating together as cheerleaders or winners of environmental awards. Pupils say they feel safe and secure, and this is confirmed by their good behaviour. Good opportunities for sport and taking responsibility are seized upon eagerly, with play leaders successfully introducing a wide range of playtime activities. Pupils have many ideas to improve their school, including an innovative book review system to guide the choice of reading. Attendance is good. Pupils respond well to the challenge of using new technology and they enjoy producing visual presentations in their own and school time. Pupils leave school for the next stage of their education as articulate and caring young people with satisfactory basic skills. However, they are isolated from wider cultural influences.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good use of speaking and listening activities, especially in drama, helps teachers to engage learners. This encourages pupils to think and discuss their ideas. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of paired dialogue, and good questioning gets pupils to reflect on their learning.

However, this is inconsistent and the pace of learning is slow at times, and teachers do not make the best use of assessment to plan the next steps in learning. Teaching assistants demonstrate a good range of specialist skills. Good relationships create a positive atmosphere for learning, and children work quietly and conscientiously. Some lessons still rely too heavily on worksheets, however.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

A good range of extra-curricular opportunities and visitors enrich the satisfactory curriculum. 'We can get fantastic opportunities in sport and music, and treats like going on a residential visit to Hilltop,' a group of pupils said. These, along with drama and modern foreign language specialists coming into school, and themed days, make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school. Work to improve writing skills by new ways of using film and digital technology is developing well. However, the school has yet to take the next step to consistently plan lessons in detail to fully match work to the precise needs of all pupils, especially for the most able, and to allow pupils to systematically build on skills across all curricular areas. Good provision for pupils with specific learning needs has meant that the school is making good use of a wide range of intervention strategies to boost their progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school meets requirements for safeguarding pupils. Child protection procedures are secure and regular checks are made to ensure the building and grounds are safe. Pupils know who to speak to with any worries; staff are 'very helpful when you've got problems.' However, academic guidance is not consistently effective. Pupils' books are not always marked rigorously enough. Comments are often too general to be of help to guide pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to evaluate what they have learned and assess their progress. This works well, but is not used consistently throughout the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher knows the school well and the communities it serves. The views of all stakeholders are valued and the great majority of parents are very positive about the school, saying they like the values it teaches their children. The leadership team and the governors are conscientious in carrying out their role in monitoring and evaluating the school. They have a realistic picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improving the quality of the building, the environment and the resources for learning has been an appropriate focus in recent years. These aspects are now good, but the school's development of teaching, the curriculum and guidance to improve the pupils' learning continues to be satisfactory. Appropriate changes and improvements are being made, but the impact is not yet evident in higher standards because the pace of change is not fast enough.

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## Annex A

## 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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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

<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.



## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

3 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Harlaxton C of E Primary School, Grantham NG32 IHT

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. I would like to share with you what we found when we spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

We think that your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We could see that there have been many changes and developments to the building over the last few years and we understand there will be even more this summer. We think that the environment you have helped to create is a really valuable resource to support your learning. We were impressed by the way you want to continue to improve it. Do keep up this good work. We also saw that the way older pupils were looking after younger ones at play was really good. Well done.

When we looked at your work, we were impressed by the creative way some of you used digital technology. I don't know if you realise, but it is not just helping you to be creative film makers, it is also improving your writing. We wished we had more time to read your film scripts, lists of instructions and analysis of other film clips. They were really good, and we would like all your teachers to use these techniques.

When we watched your lessons and looked at your work, we could see that your teachers and teaching assistants work really hard to help you to learn, and they have some really great ideas to help you. However, we would like them to develop the way they assess your work. We were pleased with the work that has begun in those classes where you are involved in assessing your own learning, but we would like to see it happening more often and in all classes. We would also like your teachers to concentrate on making the changes and improvements to their teaching and to the curriculum happen even more quickly.

Finally, we would like your teachers to help you get an even better understanding of people and events from around the country and the world. That way, we believe you will be even more prepared to move on to the next stage of your education.

All the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Brown Lead inspector