

# The Holbeach William Stukeley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120596
<b>Local Authority</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313687
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Messer

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	261
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Barbara Driver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Flynn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Spalding Road Holbeach Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 7HG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01406422102
<b>Fax number</b>	01406 426907

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is of average size. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small but increasing number speak languages other than English. Nine pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Attainment on entry is lower than usually expected of four year olds, especially in communication, language and literacy. Nearly a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. The proportion of pupils who claim free school meals is below average. It is difficult to recruit teachers in this area.

## 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 a satisfactory standard of education. It is emerging from a very difficult period caused mainly by staffing problems. The headteacher has fought hard to raise standards but it has been an uphill task. Many of the teaching staff are new and this has helped to promote a learning ethos that is rooted in a commitment to raise standards. The school now has a stable teaching force. Teachers have worked hard to turn their classrooms into stimulating learning environments and there is some exciting teaching that provides examples of good practice for others to follow. Pupils' achievement is improving but there are many gaps in their prior learning. This is partly because of a poor grasp of basic skills, such as knowledge of phonics. Pupils' learning in some year groups was adversely affected by the need to employ a succession of temporary teachers. Teaching is satisfactory overall but practice is inconsistent. Pupils make more effective progress where teachers spell out exactly what new skills they expect them to learn and check to see how successful learning has been. In some classes teachers just explain the activities to be undertaken rather than the skills to be learned.

Pupils' achievement is mostly satisfactory and sometimes it is good. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are rising. By Year 2, standards in literacy and numeracy are above average. Standards by Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and are exceptionally low in science. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are still too low because teachers are having to spend time helping pupils learn skills that should have been mastered in previous years.

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is good. Pupils' behaviour is good and the inspection found no evidence of bullying. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in class but behaviour in the designated quiet areas outside is too boisterous. The school council functions well and helps pupils to understand the principles of citizenship. Litter-picking expeditions in the surrounding parkland help to heighten pupils' awareness of their responsibilities to the community. Satisfactory care and support help pupils to know how to stay safe and look after themselves. They receive good pastoral guidance about healthy diets and the need for regular exercise. Academic guidance is inconsistent and not all pupils are sure about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils' economic well-being is fostered through activities that give them an understanding of workplace skills, such as filming a news report and making Christmas cards to sell for a profit.

The leadership of the school is satisfactory. It has made a good start in developing a revised curriculum that stimulates and engages pupils' interests. The headteacher and his new deputy give good leadership and encourage staff to work together to improve teaching and learning. The roles of subject leaders are still developing and they have yet to have a full impact on raising standards across the school. The day-to-day management of the school ensures that everything runs smoothly. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. Finances are managed well and the school provides satisfactory value for money. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection but standards have not risen enough. The new senior leadership team has given a renewed impetus to school improvement and the school has sound capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children receive a warm welcome when they start school and this helps them to settle in quickly. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory and gives children a sound start to their learning. There are some particularly good features such as the rigorous daily teaching of letters and the sounds they represent. This is helping children to develop early reading, writing and spelling skills. Activities do not always have a clear purpose. Children enjoy pedalling vehicles in the play areas, for example, but opportunities are missed to weave specific challenges into the activity, such as steering through a narrow tunnel to deliver items to shops. There are some exciting activities such as going on a Red Riding Hood walk through the parkland to grandmother's cottage. Activities do not always have a clear enough focus on precisely how achievement will be accelerated so that a specific range of new skills is learned.

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

- Accelerate progress and raise the standards pupils attain in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Require all teachers to define exactly what they expect pupils to learn in each lesson, communicate this clearly to pupils and assess the degree of success.
- Provide more challenges for children in the Foundation Stage that are designed to accelerate learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. Children's achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and many attain the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Pupils' achievement is mostly good in Years 1 and 2 and by Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Achievement is mostly satisfactory but is uneven in Years 3 to 6. It is impeded by gaps in prior learning. Pupils' writing, for example, is often marred by poor spelling because their knowledge of phonics is insecure. Consequently, by Year 6 standards are below average.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and respond well to the strong Christian ethos. Relationships among pupils and staff are positive and this supports learning well. Pupils develop a good understanding of multi-cultural living despite living in a largely mono-cultural community. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils' future economic well-being has been disadvantaged in the past by low standards, but better learning habits and attitudes are being nurtured by improved teaching. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident learners. They are eager to please and keen to succeed.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory but range from ordinary to outstanding. The best lessons are taught at a good pace by confident, well prepared and well organised teachers who demonstrate a good command of their subjects. Here pupils show high levels of interest and enthusiasm and make good progress, often from a low level of attainment. In ordinary lessons the pace is modest, pupils lack a clear understanding of what they should be learning and in a few cases teachers talk too much. Consequently, pupils are less interested in learning and make less progress. Teaching assistants provide good support especially for those who need extra help with their learning. The quality of marking is variable. The best boosts pupils' progress by involving them in evaluating their own work. Technology, such as laptop computers and digital cameras, is used well to support learning. Pupils use remote keypads in Years 5 and 6 to answer problems so that teachers can immediately assess their understanding. This is excellent assessment practice and helps to shape future lesson plans.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Everybody has been concentrating intensely on improving literacy and numeracy in recent years and other subjects, such as science, have suffered. There is a new commitment to the development of a high quality and more coherent curriculum which provides better links between subjects, greater levels of creativity and encourages pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. This is work in progress. The attractive premises are well maintained and provide a high quality environment for learning. Resources are well organised, although the library is under-used. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are good and teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards. There is an impressive range of lunchtime and after-school activities, particularly in sport and music. Visits to places of interest, such as a farm park and a Tudor house, enrich learning. African drummers and dancers support pupils' understanding of different cultures.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff are rightly proud of the emphasis the school has placed on high quality pastoral care of pupils and recognise that this has not always been matched by clear academic guidance. Now there is a better balance so that children are happy whilst also being challenged to achieve as well as they possibly can. All the necessary systems are in place to make sure that pupils are safe and secure. They understand about safety and how to lead healthy lifestyles. The quality of academic guidance is inconsistent. Some pupils receive good guidance so that they know precisely what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. Older pupils recite their clear challenging targets in literacy and numeracy and they are on course to attain them. In some classes, guidance is imprecise and pupils do not have such a clear understanding.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The leadership of the school has successfully identified the key priorities for improvement. The school is maintaining a determined drive to raise standards and there are clear signs that staff are united behind the headteacher and his new deputy and share a commitment to aiming high. A good system for measuring pupils' progress has been introduced. Challenging targets for progress expected each term are set. Senior leaders use data well to determine whether enough progress is made by each pupil in each class each term. They investigate any underachievement and provide extra support where necessary. They analyse pupils' work every fortnight to check on whether the journey towards improving standards is on course. These initiatives are beginning to have an impact but this is still inconsistent at the moment. The governing body is well informed and gives good support. Governors are not all fully aware of how much progress pupils are expected to make and how high standards should be. Consequently their monitoring of the school's performance is not as effective as it should be.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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	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 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	3
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

<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>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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	2
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

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**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Holbeach William Stukeley Church of England (VA) Primary School, Spalding Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire, PE12 7HG

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

We thought that there are some good things about the school. You said that one of the best things about the school was the teachers and we agree. They certainly work hard and, with the support of the teaching assistants, help you to learn. It is a pity that a few years ago it was difficult to find permanent teachers for all classes because this interrupted learning for some of you. Things have improved and you all seem to enjoy learning. Some of the lessons are great fun, such as when you become news reporters for the day and produce super newspapers and television news programmes.

You are well behaved and you make good friends. You support the school council and councillors are doing a good job in helping to make improvements. We think you could all think about how to make the quiet areas of the playground a bit calmer. You know how to look after yourselves and stay safe. You know that you need to take regular exercise to keep fit and you understand what food makes a balanced diet. You are willing workers and want to do your very best.

There are three things that we have asked the teachers to do to make things even better. The standards you reach by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science could be higher and there's nothing to stop you doing much better so we are asking the teachers to help you to aim even higher. We also think that you need to know exactly what new skills you are expected to learn in each lesson so we have asked the teachers to make that clearer. We also think that the children in Reception should not only enjoy playing but should learn lots more new skills at the same time.

We wish you every success in the future.

John Messer

(Lead inspector)