

# Little Houghton Church of England Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122025
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314194
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patricia George
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lodge Close Lodge Road Little Houghton Northampton NN7 1AF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 890788
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 890788

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The pupils come to the school from the village of Little Houghton and the surrounding area. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, although most children are working within the levels expected for their age when they start in the Reception Year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but the distribution of these pupils is not even across the school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are entitled to free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This small and welcoming school provides satisfactory teaching and a sound education for its pupils. Whilst standards vary at the end of Year 6, they are broadly average overall and pupils' achievement is satisfactory from their differing starting points. However, pupils' progress is not even across the school in all subjects. Children make a good start in the small and well-organised Reception Class. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, because teaching meets pupils' differing needs well in most lessons. Satisfactory teaching between Years 3 and 6 enables most pupils to make at least steady progress. However, there are occasions when teachers do not use assessment information well enough to match work closely to the needs of all pupils in these larger classes, particularly in mathematics. Well-trained teaching assistants provide valuable support for small groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make similar progress to others. Throughout the school, caring teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour successfully, helping pupils to develop good self-esteem. Marking and target setting in English involve pupils in their learning, but pupils are not always told clearly enough about how to improve their work in other subjects.

Members of staff provide good care, guidance and support and, as a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is evident in their smiling faces and good attendance. Pupils are eager to please and become responsible young individuals who enjoy helping each other and those from the wider community. They behave well despite the cramped working conditions in some classrooms.

The satisfactory curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in history and geography, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to take the initiative when recording what they have learnt in science. The school provides good additional activities such as visits and visitors and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn life skills such as how to stay safe and healthy.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has improved systems for monitoring the pupils' progress and consequently has a clear understanding of where progress dips. The use of this information has led to improving standards in writing and work has started to increase progress in mathematics, demonstrating a sound capacity to improve further. Subject leaders are enthusiastic but have too little opportunity to monitor provision so that they can get a clearer picture of what is going well and what needs improving. Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school. They make positive comments reflecting the key strengths of the school such as, 'Little Houghton is a friendly and happy school with a small team of caring staff' and 'There is a really nice family feel to this school'.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Reception Year benefit from learning in a small group where there are plenty of supportive adults. Good teaching meets their differing needs well. Consequently, they make good progress and most are working at or beyond the expected levels when they move to Year 1. Children make especially good progress in personal and social development because of the high expectations of all adults. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in lessons, although there are some missed opportunities to develop skills when children are working independently

or in small groups. The good curriculum supports learning well and includes the effective use of a well-resourced outdoor area. Teachers link activities to a common theme helping to make learning purposeful. For example, around the theme of 'Superheroes', children worked enthusiastically as they learnt about directional language whilst instructing characters to turn left or right. Leaders manage provision well and there have been many good recent improvements. For example, a more structured approach to teaching children letters and sounds has had a good effect on standards in literacy.

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

- Increase progress in mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6, by ensuring that work is always matched closely to pupils' differing needs.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to become independent in the way they record what they have learnt in science.
- Expand the role of co-ordinators so that they have a fuller picture of provision and can support good achievement in their subjects.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards by the end of Year 6 vary depending on the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each year group. Standards are broadly average in the current Year 6. Children make good progress in the Reception Year in all areas of learning, and most are working securely at or beyond the expected levels when they start in Year 1. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Pupils make good progress in reading because the teaching of basic skills is particularly effective and parents give good support at home. Pupils do not all do as well as they should in mathematics, because teachers do not consistently match work to differing needs well enough.

Sound support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps these pupils to make similar progress to others. The school sets realistic targets for the end of Year 6 and most of these were met in 2007. The school is setting even more challenging targets throughout Years 3 to 6 to ensure good progress is maintained across the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are keen to learn and speak positively about the way the school enables them to become responsible young citizens. They thoroughly enjoy lessons and are keen not to miss a day, as can be seen in their good attendance. Despite the lack of space in some classrooms due to relatively large class sizes, pupils work sensibly and behave well. They are polite and courteous, although occasionally some become restless when not being given individual support from an adult.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From starting school in the Reception Year, pupils soon show that they know the difference between right and wrong. They contribute well to the community by raising funds for charities and taking part in village

events. For example, the school choir is in high demand to perform at local functions. A well-organised school council ensures that pupils are involved in making decisions. Councillors are currently working very conscientiously to improve the quality of playtimes by purchasing new resources and developing a 'quiet area'. Pupils' good cultural awareness is evident in the respectful way they treat religious artefacts displayed around school.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Older pupils devise quizzes to encourage an understanding of what makes a 'balanced diet'. Pupils make sensible choices about what snacks to eat at playtime and participate enthusiastically in physical activity. Activities such as visits from the 'Life Caravan' help pupils to learn about how to avoid dangers outside school. Pupils develop good confidence and make sound progress in developing basic skills, preparing them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are good features to teaching across the school. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour well. Teachers use laptops effectively to introduce new skills and to reinforce learning. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to explain their ideas to the teacher or a 'talk partner', ensuring that there is good involvement in lessons. Clear explanations also enable pupils to tackle their work with confidence. Teaching assistants are prepared well in most lessons and provide sensitive support for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils' differing needs are generally met well, but in Years 3 to 6, where classes are larger and there is a wider range of abilities, work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially in mathematics. This slows the pace of learning. Pupils' work is regularly marked, although the quality of this is not consistently good in all subjects across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum helps pupils to build steadily on what they have already learnt. A recent focus on developing the use of literacy across the curriculum has resulted in pupils producing good quality written work in history and geography. However, opportunities for pupils to use their number skills in different subjects are less well developed. This slows the pace at which skills can improve. In science, there is an overuse of worksheets and these are often the same for all pupils. Consequently, pupils' written work does not always reflect their good scientific knowledge and does not sufficiently extend the skills of the more able.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good. Visits and visitors are successful in extending the pupils' experience of the wider world and help them to learn about staying safe and healthy. Pupils especially enjoy their residential visits with children from other local schools and typically say 'we do lots of exciting things' and 'we learn to make new friends'. Pupils also like being able to learn French and as one pupil said, 'it will help us when we start at the secondary school'.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Parents justifiably praise the good way in which the school supports pupils' personal and social needs. All members of staff are deeply committed to the care of their pupils, helping to make this a happy school where pupils are keen to do their best and are safeguarded well. Pupils are confident that they will always get help if they have any problems. The school works closely with the village playgroup to ensure that children settle quickly when they start school in the Reception Year.

The school has developed thorough systems for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics but this information is not always used sharply enough to ensure that work builds on pupils' differing starting points, especially in mathematics. Pupils know their targets in English, but not in other subjects, although they say that they would find this helpful. Consequently, there are some missed opportunities to give pupils guidance about how to improve further. Those who have fallen behind in their learning, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are quickly identified and supported to help them catch up.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The calm headteacher ensures that the school runs smoothly and that members of staff and pupils feel part of this friendly school community. There is a strong determination to raise standards and to do the best for the pupils. There are good links with parents and outside agencies and these are especially successful in supporting the pupils' good personal development. Most parents are very positive about the school and support their children well, especially with their reading.

The school's systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory. There is a shared and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Subject leaders and governors have received recent training to enable them to take a more active role in monitoring provision and pupils' progress. The school shows that it has a sound capacity to improve because provision for children in the Reception Year has improved since the last inspection.

Governors are kept well informed of developments and they ensure that appropriate use is made of the school's resources. Recent training has equipped them to monitor the school's work more rigorously and they are starting to do this with enthusiasm.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	3

### 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?	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.

## 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

7 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Houghton C of E Primary School, Northampton NN7 1AF

- Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. Your school provides you with a sound education. Here are some points about your school.
- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 6, but some of you could learn more quickly in mathematics.
- Children in the small Reception Class learn quickly.
- You behave well, help each other and know how to stay safe.
- You take responsibility well. The school council is well organised and is doing a good job in helping the school to improve.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are especially good at making lessons interesting so that you enjoy your work.
- You study a suitable range of interesting things. We are pleased that you were so successful at your basketball tournament. It sounded great fun.
- The adults in the school care for you well and help you when you are finding your work hard.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors know how to make your school even better.
- What we have asked your school to do now.
- Make sure that work in mathematics is always at the right level for you so that you can all learn quickly.
- Reduce the number of worksheets you do in science so that you can find your own ways of recording what you have learnt.
- Help teachers who look after subjects to check that you are all learning quickly enough.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this friendly school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector

7 February 2008

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1AF**

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- The adults in the school care for you well and help you when you are finding your work hard.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors know how to make your school even better.

**What we have asked your school to do now.**

- Make sure that work in mathematics is always at the right level for you so that you can all learn quickly.
- Reduce the number of worksheets you do in science so that you can find your own ways of recording what you have learnt.
- Help teachers who look after subjects to check that you are all learning quickly enough.

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