

Witham St Hughs Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134868
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316287
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	
School	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Zoe Haywood
Headteacher	Mr Neil Spencelayh
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Muntjac Way Witham St Hughes Lincoln LN6 9WF
Telephone number	01522 869590
Fax number	01522 869651

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are at the levels expected.

This new school opened in September 2006. It is currently at about half its full capacity. Major housing development in the village means pupils are joining the school throughout the year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some features that are outstanding. For example, leadership and management are outstanding and as a result, the quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils and parents speak very highly of the school. 'The school is excellent in every respect' is a typical comment from parents. Pupils grow and thrive in a very caring, welcoming atmosphere and feel valued. They form excellent relationships, help others and take on many responsibilities. They enjoy learning and participate enthusiastically in everything the school does. With above average standards at the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the future.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Children start school with knowledge and skills that are close to the expected levels. Their writing and creative skills are less secure. Through good provision and sensitive individual support, children achieve the expected levels at the end of the Reception Year and some exceed these. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6, resulting in above average standards overall. Standards in writing are average. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough in writing and pupils do not always apply their skills accurately in the work they produce. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them achieve well. Within the good curriculum, provision for the arts is outstanding. Out of class activities are also excellent. Many visitors and visits enrich pupils' learning and help them understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Pupils have fewer opportunities to learn about and appreciate the diverse cultures represented in Britain today. Care arrangements are good and pupils feel safe and secure at school. The school checks pupils' progress closely but pupils are not involved enough in setting their targets and do not always know what they need to do to improve their work.

Excellent teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governors has enabled the school to establish strong foundations for its future work. The school is accurate in its self-assessment. It is a happy place where everyone's contribution matters. Pupils are making good progress and teachers take immediate action where there are concerns. Although it makes it difficult to plan, teachers cope well with new arrivals as families move into the new village. Against this fluid backdrop, financial management is good. Effective allocation of resources to address immediate priorities such as resources and staff training ensures the school achieves good value for money. Governors are key in shaping the school's ethos and have very high expectations of all staff. They are extremely vigilant in checking the school's performance to secure good quality provision. The capacity to make further improvements is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Under the co-ordinator's excellent leadership children settle quickly and careful support for individuals helps all to participate fully. They experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by themselves and this helps them gain confidence and independence. Good teaching and an imaginative curriculum that considers individual needs very effectively help children achieve well. They work and play safely together within a well-ordered environment and love exploring new activities and discovering for themselves. The outdoor area is designed particularly well to support good learning but when adult support is limited, children do not always achieve all they could. As children's writing skills and creative development are less secure, provision for these is given greater emphasis so that by the end of the Foundation

Stage most reach the expected levels in all the areas of learning and some exceed them especially in their personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of all pupils in their writing.
- Ensure pupils receive the guidance they need to improve their work and involve them in setting targets and assessing their progress.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate the diverse cultures represented in Britain today.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and are working at above average standards overall in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Because of the pupils' lower starting point in writing, standards here are not as high as in other subjects. In Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are above average. The good emphasis on promoting investigation and problem-solving skills is helping pupils make good gains in these subjects. Pupils' work in art and design technology is of very high quality and is a strength of the school. Although pupils' reading skills are good, standards in English are broadly average because of the weaknesses in pupils' writing. The school is devoting more time to improve pupils' spelling and general writing skills but the impact is not yet evident.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' high attendance and excellent attitudes to learning show they enjoy school. 'It's the best school ever', is a typical comment from older pupils. Pupils express their ideas very confidently. Through excellent links with the emergency services, pupils are very clear about the dangers of drugs and how to play safely, for example, and who to go to if they feel threatened. Pupils are very kind and respectful and their behaviour is exemplary. Playground 'buddies' assume responsibilities by befriending those who are on their own. The school council influences improvement, such as by collecting litter to safeguard the environment. Through very good provision for sports activities pupils exercise regularly. Pupils know what constitutes healthy eating with many choosing healthy lunch options. Visitors such as the community safety officers, visits out, fund raising events and thought provoking assemblies all help pupils understand well their role within the wider community. Through music and the various arts projects, pupils develop an exceptional appreciation of their own cultural traditions and the pleasures these evoke. They are less aware of the cultures represented in the diverse communities of today's Britain. Through working co-operatively in their enterprise projects, they demonstrate excellent workplace skills. Their good achievement ensures they are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, and some teaching is outstanding. Lessons are lively with teachers posing challenging questions that encourage pupils to discuss and share ideas. Most respond enthusiastically and enjoy such tasks. Teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards

to make learning visual so that pupils can understand information more clearly. Good use is made of computers for pupils to do their own research. For example, pupils produce the school magazine. Teachers plan work that is generally matched well to pupils' needs but occasionally expectations are not high enough, and there is sometimes a tendency to direct pupils too much in order to cover the information. On the other hand, teachers challenge pupils well through homework that they can work on independently. Support staff are often used well to help all pupils participate but occasionally, during teachers' presentations, they have little to do. Good assessment and procedures to track progress identify pupils who need additional support so that teachers can consider how best to help them. Setting individual targets is proving effective in encouraging pupils to work hard and thus achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well structured curriculum helps pupils build successfully on previous work. Creative links across subjects, for example, history and design technology, help pupils make better sense of their learning. Enterprise skills and arts events provide excellent opportunities for pupils to extend their ideas by working with others on larger projects. Standards in mathematics and science have improved because of the good emphasis given to develop pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. Regular activities that include spelling and handwriting are helping pupils improve their writing. Effective additional programmes help pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities to participate fully. A good programme for personal, social and health education, that includes philosophy, supports pupils' personal development. Many visitors and visits bring learning alive and provide pupils with good insight into the world of work and leisure but opportunities to learn about Britain's diverse communities are less evident.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the school's good care arrangements and that teachers keep them informed of their child's progress. Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, safety and protection are all secure. Pupils know who to go to if they feel worried or upset. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good personal support, with external agencies involved where appropriate. Support for pupils new to the school is good, as are arrangements to prepare pupils for secondary school.

Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly to set accurate targets and identify quickly those who need specific help. Pupils are not as involved as they might be in deciding these targets and in assessing their own progress. While some marking gives pupils good guidance as to how they can improve their work, some falls below this standard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Since it opened the school has made rapid progress in all aspects of its work. It is well on the way to fulfilling the headteacher's vision that all pupils have the best educational experience possible. His inspirational leadership, and excellent support from the whole school community, ensure pupils gain the personal and academic skills they need to flourish in the future. The school's excellent ethos centres on promoting a love of learning and all pupils want to do well.

Staff and governors are very clear about what they need to do to have the outstanding school they want. Everyone is involved in rigorously checking the school's performance and taking the action necessary to make improvements. Subject leaders have already taken the right action, for example to improve teaching in science and mathematics. As the school's procedures and policies are all new, they are monitored closely to check their effectiveness. Teachers have good assessment information to support their planning and good access to the training they need to improve their teaching. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures pupils are on track to reach their targets.

Governors visit the school regularly and are very well informed. They see the school as an integral part of the local community and work extremely hard to secure its very good standing in the area.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

19 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Witham St Hughs Primary School, Lincoln LN6 9WF

I am writing to tell you what I found out when I came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making me feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed talking to you about the many interesting clubs you can join. I particularly liked all your wonderful artwork and the very yummy cakes children in the Reception Class made.

Your school is good and many things are outstanding. I particularly liked these things.

- You are doing well in your work and you achieve standards that are better than those we would normally expect.
- Teaching is good and your teachers provide you with interesting work that helps you learn well. The visits out, visitors and the clubs are excellent.
- Your attendance, behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and you really look after each other well.
- The school takes very good care of you and helps you to achieve success.
- Your headteacher and all the other people who run your school are outstanding and they have worked hard to make your school as good as it is.

These are things we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- Make sure you always do your best in your writing.
- Make sure you all have the advice you need to improve your work and that you are involved in setting your targets and assessing your work.
- Provide you with more opportunities to learn about all the different cultures and communities that live in Britain today.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could ask for harder work and also check your work to see if you have met your targets.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead Inspector