

# Highburton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107715
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	324631
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Adrian Francis

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	174
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr K Wigglesworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynne Rutter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Northfield Lane (off Moor La) Highburton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 0QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222730

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<b>Age group</b>	5–10
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	324631

**Fax number**

01484 222733

<b>Age group</b>	5-10
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

This small primary school is situated in a mixed socio-economic area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well below average. The school has received the Investors in People Award, a Healthy Schools Gold Award, Artsmark Gold and Activemark Gold.

## 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 that has some outstanding features. The school is very much at the hub of the local community and receives very good support from parents. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and they grow in confidence and maturity by the time they leave the school. The school's strong attention to raising pupils' self-esteem and helping them value each other's individual qualities does much to support their all-round development. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly developed a clear understanding of the school's position and is establishing effective procedures to build on its previous successes to raise pupils' good achievement further.

Achievement is good. Children enter Reception with skills that are overall broadly as expected for their age and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. By the time pupils leave in Year 5 their attainment is above expectations for their age. Current achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is outstanding, in a context where children's emotional development and their communication, language and literacy skills are becoming needier year on year.

Pupils are very friendly and welcoming, the school council takes its role very seriously and many of the older pupils take on important roles which have positive benefits across the school, such as the play leaders. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent with pupils extremely well motivated and ready to accept challenges. Consequently, they progress at a good rate and are eager to learn and try out new things. Pupils feel safe in school and develop a really strong sense of belonging to their school community. As one child put it, 'It's great being a pupil here'. The pupils' relationships with staff are excellent and parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's efforts and successes. Pupils fully understand the need to eat healthily and to exercise and the school's Activemark Gold and Healthy Schools Gold awards are testament to the successes in these areas. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school and wider community and have many opportunities for purposeful interactions with other pupils and people from a range of backgrounds. Pupils are articulate and express themselves clearly; they have an excellent awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Together with above average standards and ample opportunity to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning, pupils' preparation for their future success is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Although there have been staff changes recently, the school has a clear focus on raising standards and many professional development opportunities are provided to support this. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and manage their classes very well. On occasions, there is a tendency in some lessons to set work that is pitched to the majority and it is not always matched well enough to the range of abilities of individuals or groups to motivate them and enable them to learn effectively.

The school's pastoral care is very good. There are good links with external agencies and a strength of the school lies in its provision for the pupils' social and emotional needs. This means that individual pupils are helped to overcome any difficulties they may have and are able to achieve well. Pupils have many opportunities, for example in circle time, to discuss important aspects such as safety and friendship. Although the marking of pupils' work is thorough and often provides praise, rarely does it give pupils enough advice about how well they are doing and what to do to improve their work further.

Leadership and management are good. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate, resulting in appropriate priorities for improvement. Governors are supportive of the school. Currently many are new to the governing body and have already started strengthening their role and finding out about the school so they are able to make well informed decisions. Pupils' progress is tracked well and targets are set for improvement. However, the data are not always used well enough to set sufficiently challenging targets throughout the school to raise achievement further. In view of the school's sustained good performance since the last inspection and its clear determination to raise standards and achievement still further, it has a good capacity for future improvement. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children enter Reception from a range of pre-school settings with skills that are overall broadly as expected for their age. In recent years, however, aspects of their communication, language and literacy skills and emotional skills have been below expectations on entry. Staff visit children in their homes before they start school and this helps children settle happily into the Reception. Activities are exciting and challenge children to investigate and try things out. As a result, they are inquisitive, show very good levels of concentration and thoroughly enjoy learning. For example, a group of children were totally engrossed in an activity to find out about sea creatures, accessing information from the Internet and using a digital camera to take photographs of the pictures they found in books. Children make outstanding progress so that by the end of Reception their skills are above those typically reached in all areas of learning, with almost all exceeding the expected levels in linking sounds and letters. Children's achievement and attainment at the end of Reception is an improving picture. The strong emphasis on teaching children the links between letters and the sounds they represent gives children a flying start in early reading and writing. Children speak confidently, willingly express their opinions and enter into purposeful role-play situations with each other. The leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent. Staff make regular assessments of children's achievements and use these very effectively to plan next steps in learning and to provide additional support to those who need it. This underpins the children's all-round academic and personal development. Outdoor learning complements learning indoors effectively and there are plans in hand to improve the outdoor provision further. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are excellent.

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

- Make better use of data to set more challenging targets in order to raise achievement further.
- Ensure that marking provides clear guidance so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that work is matched closely to pupils' needs in all lessons in order to motivate pupils and help them to learn more effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Following the excellent start they make in the EYFS, pupils make good progress from their starting points in Year 1 so by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. This good progress is maintained from Year 3 through to Year 5 so that by the time pupils leave the school they are on track to achieve good results in their next school and to achieve their end of key stage targets. A close working partnership with the middle school, to which pupils transfer, ensures continuity in learning and helps pupils achieve their best. The recent refocusing

of attention on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is resulting in a sharper focus by the school on further improving pupils' progress. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed throughout the school as a result of a wide range of opportunities provided by the staff. This contributes to their good progress in other subjects of the curriculum and, for example, their above average standards in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the well focused and skilled support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is very high and their behaviour is excellent. The relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and pupils are justifiably proud of their school, setting about tasks with great enthusiasm. One child summed up her feelings for the school by saying, 'School is not boring because we are here to learn and teachers make the learning fun and different'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and they realise the importance of a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. Through a whole-school focus on sustainability, the pupils are developing a strong understanding of the need to protect the environment. They learn about different religions and cultures in lessons and assemblies and have a very well developed understanding and knowledge about being part of a wider community. The pupils' good levels of literacy and ICT set them up very well for a successful future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are effective and pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils work well together in pairs or small groups and systems that are in operation in the school, for example mentoring pairs, enable pupils to effectively support each other's learning. Most teaching is characterised by good pace and high expectations of work and behaviour. In the best lessons pupils of all abilities are stretched and work hard, with the teachers having a sharp focus on the aim of the lesson. Good use is made of a range of resources, including computers and electronic whiteboards, to make lessons as interesting and varied as possible. Support assistants are very well used to develop pupils' learning, particularly when working with groups of pupils on targeted programmes of work or when developing speaking and listening skills. Teaching and work set are sometimes not matched closely enough to pupils' individual needs and abilities. On these occasions, pupils can lose focus and the good pace of learning slows.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's good quality curriculum is increasingly geared towards the needs of individual pupils and groups. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, are engaged in their work and are very well motivated. Many aspects of literacy and numeracy are being developed through work in other subjects, exemplified by pupils' very good speaking and listening skills, their high quality work in ICT and the use of writing for a wide range of purposes. Recent moves towards developing a more skills-based curriculum aim to make learning even more engaging for all

pupils. There is a good range of visits and visitors used to enrich the curriculum and along with a wide variety of extra-curricular activities these contribute to high levels of pupils' personal development. Provision for sporting and musical activities are strengths of the school, utilising school staff and visitors. The programme to support pupils' personal, social and health education is highly effective in developing pupils' personal qualities and their emotional well-being.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's pastoral support systems are very well developed and it takes very good care of its pupils. Parents greatly appreciate the large family atmosphere created by the school and the fact that staff are positive, caring and encourage their children to learn with confidence. A typical parental comment sums up the views of many, 'The school has a lovely ethos and a friendly, welcoming and caring environment'. Arrangements to safeguard pupils and ensure their safety are fully in place. When pupils move to different stages within school their smooth transition is considered and they are well supported by the staff, led by a designated transition coordinator. The guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work through teachers' marking is not usually clear enough. Also, although some pupils have individual learning targets they are not sufficiently aware of what step they are aiming for next. As a result of these shortcomings, pupils do not always know themselves how to improve their progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The newly appointed headteacher, well supported by the assistant headteacher, has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement. Teamwork among the staff is strong and morale is high, with all staff having a shared sense of responsibility for the pupils and their learning. A well coordinated programme of staff development continues to improve staff skills and expertise, being carefully targeted at areas of priority within the school's development plan. The school tracks pupils' progress well but the resulting information is not always used to best effect by the leaders and managers at all levels in order to raise achievement further. For example, challenging targets are set in some parts of the school, but not consistently so. The school promotes community cohesion well and has evaluated what is already in place and what is relevant to pupils' needs. The school is an integral part of the local community and pupils also have meaningful interaction with people from a range of backgrounds in the wider community. The governing body carries out its duties satisfactorily. In partnership with the leadership team the governors have identified where developments are needed and are now developing procedures to increase the level of support and challenge provided to the school.



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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>	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when my colleague and I visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share with you what we found out.

You go to a good school that has some outstanding features. We were really pleased with your excellent behaviour and the way that you get on so well with each other and with adults. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and that it is just like having an extra big family. You say you feel very safe and that the school looks after you well. You work hard in lessons and your work is of a good standard. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make extremely good progress. Your school council works very hard to make your school an even better place for you to learn and to have fun. You like to take part in the wide range of clubs and activities your school provides and are proud of your achievements, such as the Activemark Gold and the Healthy Schools Gold awards. The staff and governors want you to do as well as you can. They are working very hard to make your school even better.

We would like you to do even better with your work and so we have suggested three things that will help. We feel that the ways in which the school uses the information it has about you to set your learning targets could be better. Also, we think the teachers' marking of your work could be better in helping you understand more clearly how to improve your work. Lastly, we have asked the school to make sure the work you are given is always at the right level to make sure that every child can really improve. You can help by continuing to try your best and by thinking about how you can improve even more. Everyone at Highburton First School wants the best for you and for you to do as well as you can.