

Signhills Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117782
Local Authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	326684
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Bennetts

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	254
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Sedman
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Powell
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hardys Road Cleethorpes DN35 0DN
Telephone number	01472 694993
Fax number	01472 600773

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Signhills Infants' School serves a mixed social area in Cleethorpes. A few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and no pupils have a statement of special educational need. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; a few are securing fluency in English. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Signhills Infants is a good school with some features that are outstanding. A parent says: 'I would recommend it highly to any parent'.

The school's records show that when children start in the Reception classes, their capabilities are similar to those found nationally. By the end of Year 2 they have reached standards that are above average. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils achieve well. They benefit from thorough ground work in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Other aspects of the curriculum are well developed: there are strengths, for example, in religious education (RE), physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT).

Teaching and learning are good. Many lessons capture pupils' enthusiasm. A parent says her child 'talks about her teachers with fondness and excitement and obviously enjoys learning from them'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. There is often different work for pupils of different abilities and generally all pupils have work that matches their capabilities. However, occasionally there could be a little more challenge for the most able. Pupils benefit from a good curriculum. There is specialist input for subjects such as music, RE and ICT; pupils learn key phrases in a number of languages; and they are given good opportunities to learn how to take care of themselves and keep healthy.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They enjoy school enormously and this is demonstrated in very high attendance and impeccable behaviour. Pupils are eager to make a contribution to the work of the school. With their mature social skills and the excellent transition arrangements to the adjoining junior school, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. The care, guidance and support that the school provides are of very high quality. A parent says: 'we feel that our child's needs have been well met on every level'. There is unstinting support for any who are going through a hard time and for any who find it hard to learn. There is a simple and effective system to check that all are making good progress.

The school is led with vigour and commitment. A parent writes: 'Expectations are high for children, parents and staff. Signhills Infants has created a team approach to education, with everyone playing an equal role'. The way the school is run secures the best efforts of all involved. Since the last inspection, the school has consolidated good quality in much of its provision and its outcomes. Some aspects of its work have improved to become outstanding. The school is in a strong position to take this impressive track record further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. School data shows that they start with the capabilities expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1 most reach above average standards. They achieve particularly well in language development. They make good progress in learning the basic skills needed for the future and about the wider community, for instance through eating haggis and listening to a visitor play the bagpipes. Adults welcome children very warmly. They help them to settle in quickly by getting to know them well and helping them to feel secure. Care is outstanding. Consequently, children very quickly grow in confidence and independence. They learn how to look after themselves and cooperate with others. Adults

are positive role models for children, setting examples for high standards of behaviour and demonstrating how to be good listeners.

Children experience an appropriate balance of adult-led free choice activities. However, in some classes children have more freedom to explore and experiment than in others. Despite difficulties with access to the outdoor area, teachers' planning ensures that all children have a proper balance of outdoor and indoor opportunities. Staff carefully assess children's learning needs. This enables them to challenge the more able and support those with learning difficulties effectively. Parents appreciate this. The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Areas of relative underperformance such as creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world are quickly and effectively addressed. The manager is taking a lead in developing teaching styles across the Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is always sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. School data shows that when children enter the Reception classes, their capabilities are similar to those found nationally. They make consistently good progress throughout their time at the school. When they enter Year 1, most pupils have standards that are above average. Standards in national assessments at age 7 have been significantly above average since the last inspection. Achievement is good across reading, writing and mathematics. In 2008 the proportion achieving the highest level in writing was twice the national average.

In lessons, pupils master the basic skills of sounding out words, spelling and handwriting with impressive competence for their age. A few Year 2 pupils write stories with vocabulary and punctuation which would be more typical of a Year 4 pupil. There is excellent support for pupils who find it hard to learn, so they make good progress. The school encourages very positive attitudes to learning. A parent says: 'my daughter loves every minute of it, and I am thrilled about her progress'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Social and emotional aspects of learning are well established in the ethos of the school. Pupils are exceptionally good at knowing how to look after themselves and how to stay healthy. They know the difference between right and wrong. Very positive praise from teachers brings smiles of pleasure and a positive attitude to learning. Pupils say they love coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Attendance is high and behaviour is excellent. From the outset, pupils gain self-esteem and confidence from the excellent care they receive and from successful participation in a wide range of curricular and extra curricular activities. Through the school council, pupils develop citizenship skills. They are rightly proud of the contributions they make and relish the responsibilities which allow them to contribute to the smooth running of the school. They are exceptionally well prepared for their move to junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Some lessons are outstanding. A parent says 'the staff do a wonderful job'. The best lessons involve pupils fully, making learning come alive. In a lesson about the Jewish faith, pupils set out artefacts, washed hands, wore the robes, said the words and ate newly baked special bread. Teachers and pupils have considerable stamina, even enthusiasm, for spelling tests, handwriting practice, and figuring out what to do with the 'oo' when they 'look at a good book'. In mathematics lessons pupils of different abilities often have a go at the same challenges, all experiencing success. In PE, expectations of skill development are high. Expert use is made of high quality ICT resources. Pupils enjoy and gain much from imaginative opportunities in music and art.

There are often tasks at different levels of demand for different groups of pupils. Those needing additional help are well provided for in lessons or by additional individual support from an adult. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers give highly effective support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those at an early stage in learning English, prosper. However, occasionally, whole class activities continue even though the more able pupils have already grasped the point securely.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the good curriculum. It meets all requirements and has a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Appropriate cross-curricular links are being developed with the introduction of topics and a taste of other languages. A parent says her daughter 'loves every moment as there is always something new and interesting to do'. Safety education is well developed; road and water safety are covered effectively. ICT is used well across several subjects. Time when teachers are released to prepare lessons is used as an opportunity for specialist teaching of, for example, music. The organisation within the classrooms is generally effective with pupils often working in mixed ability groups, though occasionally the more able spend too much time on a common activity. The school makes good use of a wide range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and after school clubs engage pupils' interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support are outstanding. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment are robust. Pupils' excellent relationships with adults make them feel very safe. They say their teachers will sort out any problems they have. Parents overwhelmingly agree that children feel secure and happy and are keen to attend. Staff know the pupils extremely well, both personally and academically and they match support to each pupil's needs. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported through the highly effective partnerships established between staff, parents, and external agencies. Teaching assistants and others support pupils' learning extremely well. There is an efficient system that enables teachers to keep track of pupils' progress and set appropriate targets for them to work towards. This facilitates timely and productive intervention to promote the progress of individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior staff put great store by the school's mission to foster the welfare of every child. They go to considerable lengths to ensure that all feel welcome and thrive. Staff do their utmost to promote harmony within the school. They encourage in pupils a keenness to do their bit for the wider community, and an appreciation of the diversity of the world beyond school. The school's work for community cohesion is highly effective. Parents attest to the strong care; they are full of praise for the school's pastoral and academic work. They feel that their children come on by leaps and bounds. Committed leadership has secured good teaching and an ethos where pupils take pride in themselves, their learning and their school. Everyone does their best. Leaders set a clear direction and targets are challenging.

The school is candid in self-evaluation. This is a key strength; it is the basis from which good quality is maintained and any possible slippage tackled. Deployment of staff and resources is very astute: a wealth of adult support for pupils' learning is on hand; occasions when a class's main teacher is not available have been taken as opportunities for specialist subject input. Governors support the school well and bring their professional skills, for instance in budget management, to this endeavour. The school is well placed to go from strength-to-strength.

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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

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

2 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Signhills Infants' School, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire, DN35 0DN

The inspectors really enjoyed visiting your school. We think it is good and that a lot of the things it does are outstanding.

We were impressed by the mature way you talked with us and got on with things in lessons. You are growing up to be exceptionally confident and skilful young people. The way the staff look after you is excellent and your families appreciate that greatly. There is good teaching and everyone gets on well in lessons. The range of things you learn is good and you can do interesting extra activities. You do well in reading, writing, doing sums and all the other things you learn, though we have asked the school to make sure that those who get ahead quickly have plenty to do. We think the school is really well run.

We know you are proud of your school. You have a lot to be proud of. Keep doing your best to make sure that it continues to be so good. We were impressed that you are learning how to say things in French and other languages. Here is something for you to say in French: Nous pensons que notre école est merveilleuse (We think that our school is marvellous).

We hope Signhills Infants goes from strength to strength and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Lead inspector