

Skellingthorpe The Holt Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120400
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327270
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	190
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	Mrs S Knight
Headteacher	Mrs J Leach (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Swallow Avenue Skellingthorpe Lincoln LN6 5XJ

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Inspection number	327270

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the beginning of their Reception year with attainment on entry that is broadly typical for children of this age. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is well below average. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is similar to that found in other schools, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties or autism. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. While a small number have minority ethnic backgrounds, none is at the early stages of learning English. The school has the Activemark for its provision in physical activity.

There has been a significant level of staff change since the previous inspection. Most teachers are new to the school and there have been three headteachers. The current one is acting for this academic year until the appointment of a permanent headteacher.

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. Parents share this view, with the vast majority showing enthusiastic support. One wrote, 'I think the Holt is a fantastic school and I'm proud to tell people that my children come here.' Even though there have been three headteachers and the majority of staff are new to the school since the previous inspection, governors have made suitable appointments to ensure the quality of education has been maintained and that each subsequent headteacher has continued ongoing improvement. Set against this background of change, standards at the end of Year 6 have improved. For the last three years, they have been above average and pupils' achievement is good. This trend of improvement is set to continue this year and standards are still above average.

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Excellent behaviour, good relationships and positive attitudes reflect the strong focus staff place on extending pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Pupils are spontaneous in showing courtesy and manners to each other and to adults. The school has a calm ethos, in which pupils feel comfortable. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is better than that found in most schools. One pupil said 'we like coming to school because the work is interesting, we make lots of friends and we can do it together'. Others agreed.

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall and enables pupils to achieve well. However, within this positive picture, there is some variation in the quality of teaching and of marking. During the inspection, inspectors saw some satisfactory as well as much good and outstanding teaching. School assessment data reflects the impact of these variations in the progress pupils make as they move through the school. The curriculum provides a wide range of good learning opportunities which pupils find interesting. The curriculum is effective in promoting pupils' personal development. The school provides good care and guidance for all pupils, both in terms of personal aspects of their education and their academic guidance.

Leadership and management are good and effective in moving the school forward. The successful implementation of a number of initiatives since the previous inspection, including target setting for pupils' work, tracking their progress and effective and accurate school self-evaluation, have all contributed to the improvement since the previous inspection. This means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory. Children's achievement is satisfactory, but this is now improving. Children are well prepared to join Key Stage 1, with attainment that is broadly in line with that nationally expected for their age. The EYFS is well resourced and equipped for both inside and outdoor learning. However, use of the outdoor area is limited because there is no cover and its use depends on suitable weather conditions. The school is aware of this limitation and improvement is in hand. Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching during whole class sessions is good. Relationships are good and children's behaviour is managed effectively. Children learn well during these times, for example in developing literacy and mathematical skills. However, this is not sufficiently followed up with groups of children to develop and consolidate learning. There are many opportunities for children to learn through play, both inside and outdoors. Some children stay focused on one activity for too long and there is

insufficient adult intervention to make sure all have a balanced learning experience each day. The EYFS staff show good care for pupils. Children feel secure and it is evident that they enjoy coming to school. They are proud of their achievements and keen to share what they have done. Assessment has developed well under the direction of the new EYFS leader. The teacher maintains profiles for each child, which detail achievements across all areas of learning and which give a clear picture of the levels at which each child is performing. At present, the teacher makes assessments, supported by other adults who help in making observations. Children are involved in self-assessment at a level appropriate to their age, which helps give them an idea of how well they are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and marking further by building on the best practice that exists
- Develop an appropriate balance of adult direction across all areas of learning in the EYFS to ensure that children's achievement continues to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a starting point that is typical for young children beginning school, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and for the last three years have been above average in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows a similar picture for the end of the current academic year. Initiatives to promote investigation in science and problem solving in mathematics, together with efficient systems to track pupil progress have supported this improvement. Although still broadly average, there is a similar upturn in attainment at the end of Year 2. Those who find learning more difficult achieve well against their own individual targets. Although there has been emphasis on raising attainment in English, mathematics and science, the school is careful to make sure that pupils achieve well in other subjects. There is good quality art on display throughout the school. This includes pupils' portraits, paintings, collages and sculptures and items such as clay pots reflect the rich curriculum. Music is of a good standard. Parents commented enthusiastically on the quality of pupils' performance in school productions, including drama, speaking and listening and music. Pupils learn French from Reception and this is of a good standard.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living. For example, those attending an after-school club competently made fruit salad and talked knowledgeably about eating a healthy balanced diet. Pupils maintain good physical fitness levels through their involvement in a good range of physical activities and through competing in events with other local schools. Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe in a range of situations, including some in school. They know that bullying is wrong and know what to do if they see unacceptable behaviour. The school promotes pupils' cultural development through work in art, music, geography and history. Their cultural knowledge in these respects is good but of other cultures and ways of life is less well developed and is satisfactory. Pupils make a good contributions to school life and to the wider communities. School council members make a positive contribution by identifying areas to improve the school and are proud of the difference they make. Pupils delight in acting as play leaders. This has a

very good effect on younger pupils' enjoyment of lunchtimes. Pupils contribute much to the local community and raise funds for national and international charities. They are currently busy building links with a school in Romania and have recently sent gift aid boxes to pupils. Pupils contribute to the local community, for example, by singing at local events. Good basic skills and the ability to work with others prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is mainly good; some is outstanding although there is some satisfactory teaching that the school is working to improve further. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and maintain excellent behaviour in lessons through effective management. They provide pupils with good opportunities to work collaboratively. Work is mostly matched well to pupils' individual needs and working groups. Expectations are high but very occasionally too high. This means that some pupils find difficulty and because plans are not sufficiently adapted to meet pupils' emerging needs, progress slows. High expectations are evident during class teaching sessions, when teachers ask well-directed questions to move pupils on quickly. In the very best lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is very strong and planned tasks are challenging, moving pupils on at a rapid pace. The quality of marking of pupils work varies; some provides pupils with clear direction about how they can improve their work, but some does not clearly identify the exact steps pupils should focus on to bring about improvements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school takes great care to plan and deliver an exciting range of learning activities. Carefully thought out themes provide learning links between subjects and stimulate the pupils' interest. There are curriculum plans to encourage pupils to use and apply their reading, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and collaborative working skills in a purposeful way. This results in pupils making good progress and attaining above average standards. The curriculum meets their learning needs and promotes independent learning well. The school provides a creatively rich curriculum. Art is an important feature and music has a strong position in pupils' learning experience. Pupils in all year groups learn French. Curriculum assemblies, visits, themed days and a range of lunchtime and after school clubs, enrich the curriculum well. These activities enhance the pupils' educational and personal development effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength in school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, consequently pupils are kept safe and well cared for. Risk assessments and equipment safety checks happen regularly. Procedures for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. There are good systems in place to track pupils' progress and to identify pupils who might need extra support or extension work. As a result, pupils with specific learning needs receive the necessary help to enable them to make good progress. Links with outside agencies to provide additional support are good. A parent of a child with learning difficulties wrote, 'I couldn't want any more help and support.' All pupils are set targets to help them

improve their work in English and mathematics. However, some pupils are not clear about their targets, whilst others do not always know precisely what they need to do to improve their work. This is because there are inconsistencies in the reference to the targets and in the quality of marking. Links with the secondary schools are good. This facilitates the transfer process and the continuity of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and have had the impact of promoting improvement since the previous inspection. School self-evaluation is accurate and clearly identifies the areas that the school needs to improve. To support the impact of self-evaluation, leaders and managers have shown that they have the skills and knowledge to devise strategies to bring about improvement. The strong leadership of the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher has supported change effectively. They successfully promote unity amongst staff and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Targets for pupils' attainment and achievement are challenging and support improved standards. These form the basis for teachers' performance, a process that is robust, securely in place and effective in supporting the monitoring and evaluation of school effectiveness. The school's work to promote community cohesion is good. Any issues, such as pupils' different learning needs, or issues arising from pupils' backgrounds are dealt with sensitively so that there is a strong sense of community. There are effective links with the local community and the school is raising pupils' understanding of wider aspects of the global community. Governors are effective in their work. They are well organised, know the school well and provide good levels of support and challenge. They have a wide range of relevant expertise, which they use well in helping improve the school. Governors analyse their own performance and are aware of their next training needs. They played a major role in ensuring that the quality of the school's provision was maintained during the significant changes in staffing.

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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	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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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	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	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**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skellingthorpe the Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe, LN6 5XJ

Thank you all for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We would like to thank you all for helping us find out about your school, especially those of you who gave up some of your time to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you work and speaking to you to find out what you think about the school and how you contribute to making it a pleasant place to be.

You go to a good school and those of you we spoke to speak highly of your time there. All the staff work well together to provide you with a good quality education. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care shown for you are good. You all make good progress in lessons and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.

You help a great deal by behaving exceptionally well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond to your teachers and are willing to try hard all the time. We liked the sensible way in which you make friends with others and care about each other. You help to make others feel safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are well prepared for the next stages of your education.

To make things even better, we are asking the staff and governors to:

- Improve teaching quality further and the help you receive from marking to ensure that you all make good progress.
- Improve the level to which adults guide children's learning in Reception.

I hope you will all help make the school become even better by continuing to cooperate with your teachers.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector