

# Holbeach Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120414
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327278
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathleen Campbell

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	265
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>	Mrs Isabel Hutchinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Boor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 December 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>	Boston Road Holbeach Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 7LZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01406422397
<b>Fax number</b>	01406425986

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is a larger than average primary school that serves the town of Holbeach and surrounding area. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds that are broadly average. Children currently entering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have skills and knowledge below those expected of children nationally. Early language and literacy skills are particularly weak. A low proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals and the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average. In recent years, although most pupils are of White British descent, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils has increased. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at other than the usual times is above average. The school was on the Intensive Support Programme (ISP) until the end of the last academic year, a programme intended to raise standards. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools' and Activemark awards in recognition of its work.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory and improving quality of education. The headteacher provides good leadership and is the major driving force behind improvement. She is supported by two very capable assistant headteachers, whose skills complement each other well. Together this relatively new senior leadership team has established a successful climate for learning by, for example, improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour and by making learning more fun. As a result, pupils have an outstanding enjoyment of their work. The school knows itself well and has an accurate view of areas in most need of improvement. There is a cohesive determination among staff and, to a lesser extent among governors, to make the school an even better place. There are strengths in the EYFS, pupils' personal development and in the care and support they receive. Parents and pupils know they are part of a highly caring community. A typical view is, 'I feel valued and happy as a parent'.

Despite making good progress in the EYFS, children do not reach standards expected of five-year-olds when they move into Year 1 because early literacy and language skills remain weak. Throughout the rest of the school standards are typically below average and well below in English. Past test and assessment data has indicated that progress between Years 1 and 6 has at times been inadequate. However, the current picture is far more positive. The school has worked successfully with the local authority on its Intensive Support Programme in order to remedy weaknesses. The improvements made in teaching, assessment and the curriculum are now contributing to pupils making satisfactory progress. Further work remains to be done. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with much good quality teaching observed during the inspection. However, teachers do not always ask enough of the more able pupils and the assessment of pupils' work is not always sufficiently accurate to ensure the next steps in learning are the right ones.

The good level of care and support pupils receive results in good personal development. Pupils feel their contribution to school life is valued. Thanks to the excellent work of the learning mentors, most pupils behave well. Teachers and teaching assistants show the highest commitment to their pupils. The revised curriculum is satisfactory and developing well. Pupils find activities interesting and exciting, motivating them to want to succeed. Links with partner schools are strong, particularly for sporting activities, and these successfully bring the curriculum alive.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is developing stronger links with governors and supporting the development of increasingly effective middle managers. The need to evaluate the impact of initiatives and embed the best practice is an integral part of the management of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and, based on this track record, there is sound capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start because staff provide a friendly, welcoming environment into which they settle quickly. Good relationships with families, often established during home visits, encourage parents and carers to support their children's learning. Staff focus very effectively on developing personal, social and emotional skills, ensuring that secure foundations for future development are well-established. Children are happy, confident and secure. Teachers

and teaching assistants work together very well as a team. They plan an interesting range of activities both inside and outdoors. Teaching is good, striking the right balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. The good ratio of adults to children ensures those who are potentially vulnerable or who need extra support enjoy success because they receive individual attention. Most children achieve well, including those who have English as an additional language. Valuable assessment information, combined with home diaries, shows teachers and parents how well children are progressing. This informs future planning and helps ensure high levels of enjoyment because activities meet most children's needs and interest. However, there are occasions when opportunities to challenge more able children are not taken.

Children gain a good early understanding of keeping fit, healthy and safe. Their welfare and safety are very important to the school and, as a result, children develop secure personal and social skills. They behave well and develop confidence and self-esteem as they work and play together. The EYFS is well led and managed and all staff have a strong commitment towards improvement.

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

- Increase the level of challenge so that higher-achieving pupils make better progress.
- Refine teachers' marking and use of assessment so that pupils have more information about how to achieve their targets.
- Ensure all governors are fully involved in evaluating the quality of provision and in supporting school improvement.

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**

Since 2004, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been below average overall. Given their starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. The 2008 teacher assessments showed pupils made good progress in writing, as a direct result of the 'Big Writing' initiative. In Key Stage 2, where standards are also below average, there has been improvement since an anticipated dip in 2007. Unconfirmed results for 2008 show that pupils achieved satisfactorily and overall standards rose, with more pupils achieving higher levels. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to meet even more challenging targets. There is, however, not always enough challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly in writing. The introduction of good tracking procedures has given a sharper edge to target setting, but the impact on achievement is not yet fully realised. Many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress through high quality individual support.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. High quality assemblies and strong links with local churches enable pupils to reflect on the challenges they face and help them to be considerate towards the needs of others. Behaviour is good and the number of exclusions has decreased significantly because staff manage pupils' behaviour well. The school does much to celebrate its rich heritage and wide range of cultural backgrounds. Pupils give

generously to charities and help to keep the local park tidy. They readily embrace responsibility and are proud to be school council members and play leaders. One pupil pointed out, 'We enter and do well in lots of competitions. We like a challenge'. They know how to keep themselves safe, are very aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking frequent exercise. Pupils particularly enjoy being taught physical education by a teacher from the nearby partner high school. The standards pupils attain and their social skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stages of their education. Attendance is average and improving because the school has effective systems for monitoring absence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Most lessons are carefully planned and are particularly effective in meeting the needs of lower attaining pupils and those who sometimes find learning hard. Teaching assistants play a significant role by providing good quality learning support for these pupils. As a result, standards are rising steadily and the rate of pupils' progress is increasing. Teaching is starting to meet the learning needs of potentially higher attaining pupils more effectively but the approach is not yet entirely consistent. In lessons where expectations are high and activities move along at a good pace, pupils become enthusiastic learners. They enjoy their work a great deal. As one pupil commented, 'It's a great school because our teachers listen and the work is just right.' Teachers frequently celebrate pupils' efforts and successes. This positive approach gives pupils the confidence to try their best.

Teachers are starting to assess pupils' progress with greater accuracy. Recently introduced marking and assessment policies offer improved guidance but there are still some inconsistencies. Teachers generally ensure pupils know their targets for improvement. However, the feedback pupils receive is not linked precisely enough to these targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has embraced the most recent guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy and this is helping to raise standards. The concerted focus on developing basic skills is increasing the rate of pupils' progress. The grouping of older pupils according to ability for English and mathematics is starting to meet individual pupils' needs with increasing precision. The school has recently embarked on enhancing the creative elements of the curriculum and on ensuring that pupils understand how learning in different subjects is linked together. While this aspect is at an early stage of development, pupils are finding greater opportunity to practise writing skills in different subjects. Information and communication technology is becoming a more integral part of their learning. A satisfactory range of additional activities enhances learning further. Pupils particularly enjoy the various sporting activities, but some say they would like more educational visits. Provision for pupils who sometimes find learning hard and for those with English as an additional language, is good.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good quality of care, guidance and support establishes secure foundations for pupils' personal development. High levels of commitment to welfare ensure that pupils feel extremely

secure and happy in school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. By meeting pupils as they arrive in school and supporting reluctant learners, Learning Mentors play significant roles in supporting families of those with emotional or social needs. Pupils learning English for the first time receive successful support, enabling them to settle quickly. The range of procedures to help families and pupils with pastoral care is impressive. Academic guidance, though satisfactory, is not quite as strong. Tracking of pupil progress has been refined and is starting to become embedded in teachers' planning and assessment. Its recent implementation means that it has not yet had the desired impact on standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and her senior leadership team show a strong commitment towards raising achievement and overall school performance. The role of middle managers is developing well so that they now have a clearer overview of achievement and standards in their subjects. Performance management supports development well. Staff are positive and enthusiastic and there is a good climate for further improvement. School development planning focuses well on areas in most need in the short-term but does not give a clear enough long-term vision. Changes since the last inspection to the way in which the school works have resulted in better systems, such as those that keep a closer check on pupils' progress. More rigorous monitoring of teaching is raising its overall quality. However, it is not yet consistent enough to guarantee good learning overall. Strategies to promote community cohesion are effective at both a local and international level. For example, plans are in hand to develop already productive links with a church in Tanzania. The recently appointed chair of governors is getting to grips with her new role. The governing body is well-organised and has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is, however, greater scope for governors to have more involvement in the school and the standards achieved by evaluating the outcomes of the school's work in order to support improvement more effectively.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### 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/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>	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	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

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

## 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 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	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

**Annex B**

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

29 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Holbeach Primary School, Holbeach, PE12 7LZ

Thank you for looking after Mr Bancroft, Mr Perkins and me so well when we visited your school. We liked coming into your classrooms and talking to you. We also liked watching you work and play together. Mr Bancroft thought the school council was very good. Well done!

These are some of the things that are good about your school:

- you love school and care about each other a lot
- you are very proud of your school and most of you behave well
- most of you try to do your best.

These are the things we have asked Mrs Boor and the teachers to do to make your school better:

- give some of you harder work so that you can reach higher standards
- make sure your teachers tell you what you need to do to reach your targets when they mark your work
- make sure the governors check up on how well the school is doing so that they know how to help Mrs Boor to make school better.

Keep working hard and try to help your teachers by doing your homework and always doing your best work.

Good luck to you all.

Kath Campbell

Lead inspector