

Holton le Clay Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120453
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327285
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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)	87
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 Kerry Gooderham
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Standish
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Holton-le-clay Grimsby Lincolnshire DN36 5AQ
Telephone number	01472 822065
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is smaller than an average sized infant school. All pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range, but are mainly in the category of emotional and behavioural and moderate learning difficulties.

Children start in the Reception class of the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age in all but their literacy skills. There is pre-school provision on site but it is not managed by the school governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They attend regularly, enjoy learning and are happy at school. They form good relationships and trust all the adults who work with them. They are kind to others and are keen to take on responsibilities. They understand the importance of staying safe, being fit and healthy and enjoy the many clubs and activities the school organises. Parents are positive about the school and say that staff are very approachable.

In response to satisfactory teaching, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the Reception classes, satisfactory teaching and curriculum provision result in children attaining average standards in all the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. Their literacy skills are often less secure. Pupils in Year 2 are working at broadly average standards. Progress is satisfactory through each class, although it is not as good in speaking and reading as it is in writing and mathematics. The school is addressing this by devoting more time to developing pupils' word building skills. Pupils who need extra help with their learning achieve satisfactorily because they receive appropriate support.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of basic skills' teaching is sound and some teaching is good. However, in too many lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils working by themselves do not always have the guidance they need to help them complete their work successfully. On occasions, pupils of all abilities in a class do the same tasks, resulting in overall achievement being no better than satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory. While enrichment activities are good, pupils have too few opportunities to talk and extend their literacy skills across different subjects. Care arrangements are good, as are the procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare. However, academic guidance is inadequate. While pupils' progress is monitored regularly to set individual targets, the assessment information is not always accurate or used effectively by teachers to ensure pupils have the work they need or sufficient guidance to achieve their best. As a result, some pupils, particularly the more able, are not achieving as well as they could.

Satisfactory leadership and management have brought about appropriate improvement since the last inspection. Staff and governors work hard to create a happy and attractive learning environment where pupils feel safe and valued. The headteacher has identified the right actions required to raise standards in reading and has established a monitoring programme to check that this happens. Pupils who fall behind are identified early and have the help they need to catch up. The school's self-assessment is too positive. The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour in ensuring that all pupils have the work and help they need to achieve more. While links with parents, the local community and nearby schools are good, links with communities that represent other ethnic and religious backgrounds are less well developed. Thus, the school's overall contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils are currently working at higher standards than in 2008 indicating a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for the children in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Good procedures ensure children's safety and well-being are secure. They form good relationships and as a result, are happy in their work and play. Most co-operate well with others and enjoy learning. A few do

become distracted and restless when asked to concentrate for too long or work independently. Liaison with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to help their children learn at home and say their children love school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and so a good balance is in place between adult-guided activities and those that children select. This helps children gain confidence. Teachers ensure that the teaching and curriculum meet children's needs appropriately in most areas. In light of children's lower starting point in literacy, not enough is done to develop these skills right from the outset. While good emphasis is given to developing their personal and social skills, children do not spend enough time talking about their learning in order to extend their literacy skills, and so do not attain average levels in this area by the end of the Reception year. The work on learning letters and sounds is starting to address this. Children's physical development is good because they love the exciting outdoor area, for example, for climbing and exploration. Satisfactory teaching develops children's basic skills adequately. Staff check that children explore everything, but do not always challenge the more able to extend their skills sufficiently. Children who need extra help with their learning are supported satisfactorily. Teachers assess children's progress regularly but assessments are not always accurate to plan subsequent learning effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities in all classes and subjects for pupils to talk and thus extend their speaking and overall literacy skills.
- Make more consistent use of assessment to challenge pupils fully, particularly the more able, and provide the guidance they need to improve their work.
- Develop the pupils' awareness of the cultures and traditions in the wider world.

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

Children make satisfactory gains in the Reception classes and this level of achievement is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Teachers know how much progress is expected of pupils in each year group and most of the work they do helps them make these gains. In the teacher assessments of 2008, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were below average in writing and mathematics and well below average in reading. This year group was a particularly low attaining cohort. Pupils in the current Year 2 are working at broadly average levels, although a fewer number than would be expected are working at the higher levels. Standards are slightly lower in reading but, as a result of the extra emphasis on developing word building skills this year, standards are rising. Throughout the school, there is insufficient challenge to help more able pupils achieve more and hence raise standards further. Through satisfactory support, pupils who find learning difficult achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory because staff guide them thoughtfully. Pupils are polite and friendly and help others willingly. They generally

behave satisfactorily, listen attentively and enjoy learning. Most work hard in lessons but a few lose concentration when lessons lack interest and challenge. Consequently, their behaviour lapses, as is the case when they work independently. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need to stay safe and healthy. Despite occasional boisterous behaviour, most feel safe in the playground and go confidently to teachers if problems arise. Many attend various sports clubs and enjoy keep-fit but their packed lunches do not always contain healthy meal options. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. For example, school councillors decide on ways to improve the school and play-leaders organise equipment in the playground. They look after their environment and know about recycling projects. Many visits and visitors extend pupils' awareness of the world of work and leisure. While pupils have a good understanding of their local community, their understanding of the cultures and traditions represented in Britain today is less well developed. Attendance is satisfactory, but a few do not arrive punctually. The progress pupils make in their basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the good lessons, pupils achieve well because the work is suitably matched to their interests. Pupils particularly like lessons that involve practical activities and teachers add an element of competition, for example, completing mathematical calculations against the clock. Support staff help individual pupils and small groups appropriately. Teachers make good use of computer facilities to present information so that pupils learn more effectively. They generally involve pupils in question and answer sessions but their expectations are not always high enough in terms of the responses generated. Too often pupils have insufficient time to talk about their learning and ask questions. Consequently, they do not always understand what to do when they work independently. Teachers have information about the progress of individual pupils and groups and most use this appropriately to plan teaching and learning. Occasionally, all pupils experience the same presentation and complete the same tasks. As a result, teaching does not always meet the needs of all pupils effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The basic curriculum is structured well enough to help teachers plan what pupils need to do from year to year but it lacks challenge. The school is at an early stage of developing a more creative approach to extend pupils' speaking and literacy skills through more practical activities in different subjects. Several suitable schemes and intensive support programmes provide an adequate framework to support teaching and learning, particularly for those find learning difficult. Following the decline in reading standards in 2008, all classes now follow the same programme to promote pupils' word building skills. As a result, standards have improved. Pupils now have good opportunities to carry out investigations and problem solving in mathematics and science and so standards are improving. A satisfactory programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. Visits, visitors and many out-of-school activities, for example the dance, games and sewing clubs, add to pupils' enjoyment and give them good opportunities to develop their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care arrangements are good. Child protection and health and safety procedures all meet requirements. The school ensures that adults who come into contact with pupils are vetted appropriately. Pupils say that staff will help them if they report any concerns, and problems are dealt with effectively. Sensitive support for pupils who find learning more difficult mean they are included in lessons appropriately. External agencies are consulted where necessary. Children are supported well when they first start school.

There are weaknesses in academic guidance. Achievement is tracked regularly but the assessments are not always accurate. Pupils, particularly the more able, do not always have enough guidance as to how to improve their work. Teachers mark work regularly and offer supportive comments but do not always encourage pupils to check their work to see if it is their best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her staff ensure that the school runs in an orderly manner and that pupils feel happy and secure. She involves all staff and governors in monitoring the work of the school. While monitoring happens regularly, it occasionally lacks rigour. The monitoring of teaching does not look closely enough at how well pupils learn. Subject leaders review their subjects but do not check that teachers challenge pupils fully through their planning. However, the school is taking the right action to improve reading and the curriculum and overall standards are higher than in 2008. Governance is satisfactory and governors support the school well. Their role in challenging the school, to improve the quality of provision and hence raise standards, is not fully developed. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion through developing pupils' skills in forming harmonious relationships within the local community. It has links with a school in Africa, but pupils still do not have enough opportunities to explore other cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom.

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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?	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?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

13 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Holton le Clay Infant School, Holton le Clay, DN36 5AQ

I am writing to tell you what I found when I came to your school recently. Thank you for making me welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed talking to you about school, the good friends you make and the interesting clubs that you can join, like the dance club. You told me that you like school. You said that you feel safe at school and that staff will help you if you have problems. Most of you try to do your best but I know a few of you could do even better if you listened to your teachers more carefully. The school is certainly a friendly place and you work and play together sensibly. I could see that from watching you enjoy yourselves in the playground with the many toys and games you have. You know how to look after yourselves and understand the need for regular exercise. You told me why it is important to eat healthy food and that you like fruit and yoghurt in your lunch-boxes. You look after each other and do kind things like raise money for a charity. While most of you said behaviour was good, a few of you said some children did not behave well. I think a few of you sometimes do not behave as well as you could.

While I think most things in your school are satisfactory, some things could be better. I think that you could achieve higher standards, so I have asked teachers to make sure that you all do the best that you can in all your lessons. To help with this, I want teachers to give you more time in your lessons to talk about what you are learning and ask teachers for help if you do not understand what to do, especially when you work by yourselves. I have also asked the school's leaders to check very carefully how well you are doing, so that they plan the right work for you. I have asked the teachers to give you the help you need to improve your work. While you know a lot about living in Holton Le Clay and all that happens there, I have asked the school to do more to help you learn about people from other countries who live in England and about people who live in other parts of the world.

Once these improvements have been made, your school will be much better.

There are things you could do to help too; for example, you can make sure you do your best work, even when you work by yourselves. I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector