

Holbeach Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120413
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339684
Inspection dates	23-24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Ingham
Headteacher	Mr David Baldwin
Date of previous school inspection	28-29 March 2007
School address	Roman Bank Holbeach Bank, Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 8BX
Telephone number	01406 423375
Fax number	01406 423775
Email address	enquiries@holbeachbank.lincs.sch.uk

Age group	4-11
Inspection date(s)	23-24 September 2009
Inspection number	339684

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governor representatives, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including their work to safeguard pupils. They also examined school documentation such as pupil performance and assessment data, the school development plan, and the minutes of the meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also considered the 42 parental, 32 pupil and 11 staff questionnaires that were returned to the team during the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- the attainment of pupils and the progress they make from their starting points on entry into Reception class to the end of Year 6; including those with special educational needs, traveller children and boys
- the quality and impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning and progress
- the quality and effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of leadership and management of the senior leadership team, middle managers and governors.

Information about the school

Holbeach Bank is a much smaller-than-average primary school. It serves the small rural village of the same name and surrounding hamlets within Lincolnshire. Approximately one fifth of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. Virtually all pupils are from a white British background. A small proportion of pupils are from the travelling community. None of these pupils have been in school during the part of the summer term in which Key Stage 2 national statutory tests are taken. There is a significantly higher than average proportion of boys in school. The proportion of pupils deemed to have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally. Recently, further pupils with statements of special educational need were admitted into Year 5 and 6 and this has increased the proportion of statemented pupils to above average.

The number of pupils attending the school has fallen rapidly over the last three years. As a result, the number of pupils in each year-group is small with the largest currently being Year 6 where there are fourteen pupils. The school is organised into three classes. Class one incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage comprising six Reception aged pupils. It also caters for Year 1 and 2 pupils. Class 2 has Year 3 and 4 pupils whilst class 3 provides for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The school has attained the ActiveMark award and the Healthy Schools Standard.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Holbeach Bank is a satisfactory school. Amongst its strengths are the actions taken to help pupils adopt healthy life styles. A strong focus on promoting pupils' social and moral development alongside good pastoral care ensures that pupils enjoy their time at school. This is evidenced by pupils' good behaviour and borne out in most of their responses to the inspection questionnaire and regular school surveys.

The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has focused on moving the school forward through the continual change in staffing and falling pupil numbers. Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are below and sometimes well-below that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress so that by the time they leave school in Year 6, they attain standards that are broadly average. However, the school is aware that standards at Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, have proven slow to improve and are taking concerted action to tackle this. For example, boys' writing has lagged behind that of the girls and the school has invested in resources specifically designed to stimulate boys' interest. There has been significant improvement in standards by the end of Key Stage 1 because of the school's determination to improve them. In 2009, results were near to the national average. Over the previous three years they had been well-below.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some is good and even outstanding, but it is not consistently good enough to fully tackle the history of low attainment on entry or ensure pupils always make the best progress in their lessons, particularly in writing and for the most able. This is because teachers do not always use the good tracking information they have about their pupils' progress to plan work that is always well-matched to their individual needs.

The quality and effectiveness of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also satisfactory. However, there is an imbalance in the proportion of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Additionally, the choice and range of activities available are limited to certain times of the day. Consequently, opportunities for children to develop their investigatory skills, make decisions or take a more active part in their learning are restricted.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory because despite actions taken and the improvements made, the progress pupils make is satisfactory overall. Whilst most actions identified for improvement in the last inspection have been tackled effectively, standards in writing have not improved as well as they

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

should. Nevertheless there are strengths. The headteacher has become adept at supporting the development of new members of staff and managers quickly. There has been improvement in assessment and the quality of teaching because of purposeful actions taken. All staff responding to the inspection questionnaire report they are proud to be members of the school and feel their contribution is valued. Middle managers say they feel empowered to take actions needed to continue to improve work of the school and cite recent successes such as improvements in science and assessment procedures. They feel well supported and held to account rigorously through the performance management process and pupil progress interviews with the headteacher. Senior and middle leaders monitor the school's work effectively and, as a result of accurate self-evaluation, have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge is translated into a clear school development plan which is monitored and evaluated regularly by senior managers, staff and governors to check progress and inform future actions. Governors provide a satisfactory balance of challenge and support to the school. Given the satisfactory progress pupils make, improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing by:
 - making sure the regular assessment of pupils' work is always used to inform planning and teaching, so that lessons are always matched to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly for boys and the most able
 - making sure all teaching is as good as the best by sharing the good practice clearly evident in the school.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to be active learners and make choices and decisions through:
 - providing a wider range of stimulating and challenging activities, more exploration and problem solving opportunities throughout the day
 - redressing the imbalance in adult-led and child-initiated activities
 - organising the classroom to ensure children in Reception always access the most appropriate curriculum for them.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspection evidence, the school's lesson observations and regular assessment information show that pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils often make good progress because of highly effective teaching and good deployment of teaching assistants and helpers, who support those who have difficulties in their learning well. In writing across the school, progress is weaker and standards are lower. Girls, pupils who are vulnerable, those with learning difficulties

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and/or disabilities and traveller children all make similar progress to their peers. Boys also make satisfactory progress in their learning in lessons. However, their performance in end of Key Stage 2 tests has been lower than that of girls, particularly in writing. Senior managers are taking appropriate steps to improve matters. In fact, the underachievement in writing in 2009 meant that results in English tests were no better than the previous year. However over 90% of these pupils attained Level 4 or above in their reading test.

The school provides a safe and secure environment. Actions to ensure pupils' personal safety are well-supported through the school's good partnership working with the community police support officer, fire service and school nurse who visit school regularly. All parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children are safe. Pupils generally say they feel safe and are taught well about risks. A small number commented in their inspection questionnaire they did not feel safe. During discussions with inspectors, when asked about this, a couple of pupils expressed concerns about the height of the perimeter fence. However, in recent years governors have completed fencing the whole school border to secure pupils' safety. Pupils say there is little bullying, conflicts are mainly name-calling which they say is tackled decisively. A few parents reported dissatisfaction with pupils' behaviour. Pupils say they behave well and inspectors agree. Pupils are particularly proud that no 'blue tickets' have been issued so far this term. Their good understanding of how to be healthy is well-promoted through the personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum, the many sporting opportunities and healthy school meals. Pupils enjoy contributing to the life of the school, readily taking roles of responsibility such as house captains, school councillors and playground leaders and are proud of their charitable fundraising activities. However, the school is aware that opportunities for pupils' to contribute to the sparsely populated local communities are more limited. Pupils develop well socially during their time in school, displaying good attitudes and team working skills, which together with their average attendance and effective transitions to secondary school ensure they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils' positive attitudes to learning are evident in all lessons. In the best lessons, teaching is brisk; teachers constantly check pupils' understanding to make sure they move at a pace that helps them to make good progress. A variety of activities and resources help pupils to remain interested and enthusiastic. In such lessons, work is well-matched to pupils' abilities and they work successfully independently, in groups or pairs. They evaluate their own work against well-matched individual targets and consider what they need to do to improve further. In satisfactory lessons, there is sometimes too much lengthy teacher-talk restricting pupils' opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, independent learning skills or spend enough time on their learning objectives. In these lessons, pupils tackle whole class activities that are sometimes too easy for some and too hard for others. Consequently, pupils' progress slows, particularly for the most able.

The assistant headteacher has developed a detailed whole-school tracking and assessment process. Information gathered is used to set individual targets for pupils that are reviewed half termly. Senior staff use this information with teachers during regular pupil progress interviews and to develop interventions to help any pupils that might be slipping behind. However, teachers are not always using this information precisely enough to make sure lessons are always pitched to pupils' individual needs.

Despite changes in staffing and leadership of key subjects, the school continues to provide a satisfactory curriculum. Pupils value the social and emotional aspects of learning programme (SEAL) which also helps to promote their personal development and well-being. The curriculum is enriched well by a range of additional visits such as visits to the farm, the outward bound activities centre and activities and clubs available during lunch times and after school, including the popular newspaper club.

The school is strongly committed to providing a caring and supportive environment and is effective in this endeavour; particularly so for pupils who face temporary challenges in their lives or in their learning. There is particularly good support from the learning mentor whom children rate highly as someone who will listen to them, care for, and help them in times of need.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Because of the strong focus on pupils' care and safety, staff take appropriate action to assure they satisfactorily meet all necessary requirements for safeguarding and child protection. It is a small school; so teachers and pupils know each other well. Staff go out of their way to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all the school has to offer. For example, running lunch-time activities as well as after school activities to enable more children who travel to school by bus to be fully involved. Good action is taken to tackle any hint of a rare racist incident and pupils new to the school are included well. Pupils are sensitive to needs and differences of others and are caring of each other. Pupils' progress is tracked individually and action taken when pupils fall behind or need extra help. The school is aware that there are variations in pupil outcomes within subjects, such as writing and in the performance of boys, and leaders are taking actions to remedy this.

Partnerships with parents and agencies who support the school in its work are satisfactory. The school constantly strives to consider ways to engage productively with parents. Partnerships with parents and other agencies are particularly strong for pupils with special educational needs, or for vulnerable pupils facing challenges in their lives. A couple of parental questionnaires reported that communication and information on their pupils' progress could be better. Conversely, a couple of other responses believe communications to be good. The school has an 'open-door' policy and sends out a newsletter every week containing a range of information. Formal parent evenings are held twice a year, alongside other opportunities to come into school.

The school promotes community cohesion effectively. There is a strong sense of belonging and harmony in the school. This was also evidenced by staff and pupils' responses in the inspection questionnaires. Actions are taken to ensure pupils have an understanding of a range of different international communities and there are some limited opportunities to enable pupils to mix with others from more diverse backgrounds, for example, through their visits to the outward bound centre. However, the school is aware that more needs to be done to broaden pupils' understanding of more complex communities across Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	3
--	---

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

From often well-below levels of ability on entry, children make often satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards their early learning goals by the time they leave Reception. Children's dispositions, attitudes and behaviour are particularly strong because of the good relationships between adults and children and the harmonious and caring atmosphere that children experience and contribute to. Effective induction, partnerships with parents and welfare arrangements help children to settle and enjoy this warm, safe and supportive environment. Children's skills in linking sounds and letters, reading and calculating are less well-developed because of opportunities for children to extend their formal learning through hands-on practical activities and exploration are more limited. Children sometimes spend too much time in teacher-directed lessons and this also limits their opportunities to choose and determine activities for themselves. There has been significant investment in the outdoor area and children enjoy the range of activities and equipment available. But access to outdoors is restricted to certain times of the day. Consequently, this limits children's opportunities to develop their ideas seamlessly from the indoor environment to the outside. Adults support children's learning satisfactorily. Staff work well together as a team and make frequent observations of children's learning. However, this information is not always used effectively enough to match activities to children's needs and interests, so opportunities are missed to stretch children's learning and understanding. The enthusiastic new leader of the Early Years Foundation stage, supported by the recently appointed teacher, is taking decisive action to improve areas of provision that are not as good as they could be. She has quickly got to grips with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and has sought out appropriate external support to help improve provision further. Rigorous data analysis is already helping to change the way that letters and sounds and calculations are taught.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Forty-two parents completed questionnaires with 44 responses when taking into account those reporting for more than one child. In total, there are 64 parents and carers registered at the school. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire were happy with the school's provision. A large majority reported that their children enjoy school. All reported their children were safe and consider the school helps their children have a healthy life-style. A number made additional comments; seven were positive and a similar number more negative. The headteacher was made aware of these comments and those of pupils, when it would not breach the confidentiality of the respondents and has taken steps to tackle any issues arising.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holbeach Bank primary school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	55	17	39	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	50	17	39	3	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	39	22	50	3	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	18	41	24	55	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	18	41	22	50	3	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	41	25	57	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	36	23	52	2	5	2	5
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	39	22	50	3	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	34	16	36	11	25	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	30	26	59	3	7	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	15	34	23	52	4	9	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	43	21	48	2	5	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



24 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbeach Bank Primary School, Spalding, PE12 8BX

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently; a special thank-you to those of you who spoke to me and my colleague during the inspection. It was important to hear your views and see yours and your parents' responses to the inspection questionnaires. Half of you completed the questionnaire and I am glad to see that most responses were very positive. All of you who responded think you are helped to live healthy lives, learn a lot in lessons and know what you need to do to improve. Most of you enjoy school, think behaviour is good and feel safe in school. A small number of you reported that you do not feel safe. When I spoke to some pupils about this, they thought it may be due to the fence around the school being low enough to jump over. However, the school sought advice when they made the school grounds secure to make sure it was the correct height. I have let Mr Baldwin know your views and he is anxious to make sure all of you always feel safe.

Some parents think your behaviour is an issue. However, whether I was in a classroom, walking along corridors or out on the yard, I saw only good behaviour. You are particularly proud that no 'blue tickets' have been issued this term. You say there is always someone in school to talk to if you have a problem or need some help but you have especially positive praise for the learning mentor whose help you value very much.

Holbeach Bank provides you with a satisfactory quality of education with strengths in your behaviour and the way that staff make sure you know how to live healthy lives. You make satisfactory progress from the time you enter school in Reception to the time you leave in Year 6. However, your standards in writing, particularly for boys, are not as good as they could be and although the standards you attain are broadly average, the school knows they need to be even better. I have asked the school to do this by making sure all teaching is as good as the best and making sure the good information they have about your progress is always used in lessons to help you all

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **08456 404045**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

make good progress in your learning. Children in Reception enjoy their time there, get on well with each other and staff. However, opportunities to choose activities for themselves or take advantage of the greatly improved outside area throughout the day are limited. I have asked your teachers to improve this.

Once again thank you for your helpfulness and I wish you all the best during your remaining time in school.

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone [08456 404045](tel:08456404045), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.