

Hillcrest Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120490 |
| Local Authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 339708 |
| Inspection dates | 13–14 October 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Trevor Watts |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 175 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Luke Tindley |
| Headteacher | Mrs Julie McDonald |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 February 2007 |
| School address | Heapham Road Gainsborough Lincolnshire |
| Telephone number | 01427 613483 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, procedures, pupils' work and questionnaire responses from pupils and staff and 59 responses from parents and carers.

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

- standards, particularly in English
- the effectiveness of the school's leadership team, including the role of the governors
- the use of assessment to guide future teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This is a moderately sized school in a rural suburb of Gainsborough. The entitlement to free school meals is twice the national average. Almost all pupils are White British and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also about double the national average.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Well-organised and decisive leadership and management have created strong teamwork among the enthusiastic and capable staff in this good school. The curriculum has been built up and well extended since the previous report and there are now many enhancements and extra opportunities for pupils. Many improvements have enabled the school to maintain standards at an above-average level, especially through the great care and support given to the increasing numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have their needs met extremely well. Currently the school is introducing measures intended to raise the reading standards to match the higher levels for mathematics and writing.

Pupils enjoy school and their lessons very much, and they behave impeccably, but not in a subdued way. They are excited and eager to learn. They learn a very good sense of what is right and wrong, and cooperate together and with adults. They learn much about the local area, and join in with many local events and trips out, but their awareness of multi-cultural aspects of Britain is weak.

The governors soundly support the strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff. They help especially with family and community liaison, and they are a powerful voice in organising the finances, health and safety-related aspects and the premises. They are not seen enough in school to be well known, however, and cannot challenge the school's interpretation of pupils' progress until they have a clearer understanding of it.

The school has evaluated itself accurately in a joint effort by staff and governors. The strengths and weaker areas have been highlighted and either celebrated or remedied by well-focused intervention programmes. These include, for instance, the creation of an assessment scheme that allows analysis of different groups of pupils, and having a standard lesson planning style with clear levels of challenge for different groups of pupils. The school's good capacity to sustain further improvement is based on the effectiveness of the senior leadership team, particularly the headteacher, ably supported in most aspects by the governors. Developments since the previous inspection have improved outcomes for pupils and reflect a determination that everyone will succeed, whether they are pupils or staff. Leaders already have several improvement projects underway, including the reorganisation of the curriculum into a more cross-curricular or 'topic-based' design.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the standard of reading, especially for boys, so that it matches the

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above average standards in writing and mathematics, by developing a wider range of activities to give more support to individuals and small groups of pupils.

- Improve pupils' awareness of Britain and the wider world as a multi-cultural entity.
- Raise the profile of the governors inside the school, and their awareness of pupils' performance in major subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children enter the Nursery at levels well below those expected nationally. They make very rapid progress in their social and emotional skills, and are soon helping each other and sharing their crayons, brushes and computers. In other areas of learning children make slower progress, but this is still at a good rate. By the end of the Reception Year when they go into Year 1, they have almost reached the level normally expected in all areas of learning.

In Key Stage1 pupils continue to make good progress. They achieve well and by the end of Year 2 they are attaining at higher levels than nationally expected, especially in mathematics. Attainment in reading is only just above the national level and the school is introducing new initiatives to bring this back up to the level of several previous years. Boys' reading is at a lower level than the girls'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress. Many achieve at levels expected of all pupils nationally, and on average they achieve at a significantly higher level than is predicted, considering their difficulties. Achievement in physical education activities (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT) is also strong. Pupils' learning and achievement in lessons is good, assisted by their outstanding behaviour, high level of attention, and involvement and willingness to accept challenges in their work.

Pupils behave exceptionally well whatever activity they are taking part in. Whether they are concentrating in an English lesson, enjoying an exciting PE session, at lunch or in the playground, they are sensible and treat each other with consideration and friendliness. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to live healthily; they eat sensibly and have plenty of exercise and sporting opportunities. They enjoy school very much. Two pupils summed up their attitude overall. 'School is brilliant,' wrote one. Another wrote, 'School is my favourite thing.' They say they feel safe and would speak to any of the adults in school if they had problems of any kind. They develop good skills to help them in the future, not only in English, mathematics and ICT, but also in being cooperative, listening to what they are told, sharing things and being on time. The attendance rate is average. It is hindered by a very few persistent absentees, but much helped by the school's strong efforts to encourage attendance. Pupils take up many opportunities to help in their own school community, such as by being the 'helper of the day'. They also help in the wider community through numerous fund-raising events and activities that involve many local people and families. Working with the governors, they are presently helping with efforts to refurbish and re-dedicate a local memorial from the First World War. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, and they learn

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much about their local area and its heritage. However, they learn too little about other more distant cultures and their awareness of a multi-cultural Britain and wider world is not well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and learning are based on thorough lesson planning that arises from accurate assessment of pupils' previous learning. Planning and activities include several levels of difficulty so that pupils of different abilities are challenged well. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and are skilful when asking penetrating questions and involving all pupils in a class. Pupils are skilfully helped in their learning with constructive, individual attention from teachers and classroom support staff, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties. A new assessment system is particularly powerful as a tool to analyse attainment trends of different groups of pupils. Teachers are beginning to use this effectively to plan their own classroom teaching and for seeing longer term successes or weaknesses that require whole-school attention. There are times when lesson activities are interesting but are not directly

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

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related to the main aim of the lesson. Teachers make good use of their resources, from outside equipment to the computing equipment.

The curriculum is good because it is practical and wide-ranging. The school is endeavouring to make it even more creative and relevant by moving to a topic approach instead of teaching distinct subjects. Valuable support is given by outside partners, particularly for sporting activities and to support pupils with additional learning needs. The school has the highest 'Healthy Schools' award for its high standard of learning in health-related matters. The 'Go4it' award recognises the school's many enterprising activities, including a residential trip each year as well as many other day trips and regular clubs such as for football, a choir, ballroom dancing and golf. Some of these are very new and are not yet well established. Many trips are organised to take pupils out locally, and visitors from the community come in regularly, including musicians and artists.

The good care, guidance and support are based around staff's positive attitude and good knowledge of their pupils. Shared information and step-by-step processes ensure that transition from one class or key stage to another is smooth. This process begins well with the 'Hamsters' club' that is attached to the nursery for pre-school children and their parents. Children with special needs and/or disabilities are especially well cared for, guided and supported in their personal and learning needs. Capable and well-trained support staff in each classroom are very important in this role. The premises are secure. The school takes strong measures to reduce absenteeism and to encourage good attendance through close liaison with the local authority, attendance awards and constant family contact, for example.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders manage the standard of teaching and learning well. They regularly observe lessons and have accurate views about the standards they are seeing. They take supportive and decisive action to spread good practice such as assessment of individuals and groups of pupils, and planning and organising challenging work for all groups of pupils. Weaknesses are also remedied with additional support, training and working alongside another member of staff. Clear targets are set for all staff through the performance management process. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully. It manages the finances and premises well, and is very good at involving the community

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in school events, both in school and in the surrounding community. However, their awareness of pupils' standards in core subjects is not strong enough to help them to challenge senior staff over academic matters, and they do not have a high profile in school. Parents and families are actively encouraged to be very involved in school matters, from questionnaires and an open door policy to day trips, shared learning afternoons and 'Family Fridays'. The school has innumerable partner organisations to enhance aspects of pupils' learning, including many sporting and health-related ones, special needs professionals, a university and several churches. Local businesses are also well involved in sponsorship and organising events such as enterprise days and weeks. The school takes particular care in ensuring that all of its pupils get a good deal. Whether pupils have particular learning needs, are less able, or otherwise at risk of under-achievement, staff go out of their way to assist and support them. This is not just on a classroom level, but a whole-school one in which the welfare and progress of the individual is paramount. For example, the school specifically employed new staff with expertise in music and ICT recently because it considered that these areas were neglected. Strong safeguarding measures are taken and all current requirements are met. Thorough policies for all aspects of safeguarding are adhered to scrupulously by staff and the school liaises closely with parents, carers and outside agencies to support vulnerable children. There is extensive staff training, including that for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The governors have full regard for health and safety matters, and have received training in safe recruitment of staff. In ensuring that personal and academic outcomes for pupils are strong, the school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Although children enter the Nursery at a level of skills well below that generally expected of children their age, they make good progress, especially in their social and emotional skills. They quickly begin to relate to each other and pay attention when staff are talking to them. They take part in a great variety of interesting and challenging activities, some of their own choosing, and some led by staff as a 'focus' activity such as reading or writing. About half of the activities are outdoors in their own specially equipped play area. They are looked after very ably by staff who are trained to a high standard and who know the children and their families well. They continue to make good progress through the Reception year and go into the main school almost at the level of attainment expected nationally for children their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage unit is well led and organised, with detailed plans of the curriculum, much good equipment and enthusiastic and friendly staff.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

All of the analysed responses were entirely positive, mostly strongly so. Three responses arrived too late to be added to the statistics, and one of these parents thought she was not well informed about her child's progress. Comments were typically about the 'family' ethos of the school: two parents wrote about 'this warm welcoming environment,' and 'the community feel'. Others described 'good and enthusiastic teaching,' and how much their children love school and their teachers. One expressed concern about the temporary use of hand towels in washing areas, which the school has discontinued.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hillcrest Infant and Nursery 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 35 | 63 | 21 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 37 | 66 | 19 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 30 | 54 | 26 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 33 | 59 | 23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 38 | 68 | 18 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 31 | 55 | 23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 31 | 55 | 23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 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) | 28 | 50 | 26 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 30 | 54 | 26 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 34 | 61 | 21 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 24 | 43 | 30 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 36 | 64 | 20 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 41 | 73 | 15 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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 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 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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 pupil's 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. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Hillcrest Infant and Nursery School, Gainsborough
DN21 1SW

I am sure you will remember recently when the inspectors visited you to see what your school is doing for you. Thank you for talking with us and helping us.

We found that you go to a good school and you all told us that you enjoy your lessons and like your teachers. You especially like all the extra things you can do, like sports and visits away from school. You behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. The adults in school look after you well and they provide a lot of exciting things for you to do and learn about. You are happy to talk with them about any problems you have. We found that you learn well in all sorts of different subjects, but we are asking the school to try to make your reading even better. Children who might find some of the learning hard are given a lot of extra help, and this helps them to be as good as they possibly can be. We would like you to learn more about other people who live in different ways to how you live, whether they are close by or in other countries.

The headteacher and staff are good at organising things like lessons, and the subjects you are taught, and all the equipment you have. The school governors help them, but we would like the governors to be seen more in school so you know who they are, and so they can find out more about how well you are learning.

Best wishes

Trevor Watts

Lead inspector

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