

# The Horncastle St Lawrence School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120757
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339766
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Lemon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Stark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr K Bruzas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bowl Alley Lane Horncastle Lincolnshire
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of school policies, the school improvement plan, external monitoring reports and 51 parental questionnaires.

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

- the school's evidence of pupils' progress
- the behaviour of pupils
- the extent to which teaching engages pupils in learning, creates enjoyment and matches work to pupils' needs
- the extent to which leadership and management are embedded and improving the school.

## Information about the school

The school provides for up to 125 pupils who have statements of special educational needs identifying moderate learning difficulties. A minority have additional needs; 45 pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties; 27 have an autism spectrum disorder and 11 have a visual impairment. The school provides a resource for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils come from a wide area of Lincolnshire; the great majority are White British and all speak English as their first language. While pupils can be admitted into any year group, the largest group of new entrants is in Year 7. There are no pupils in Years 1 and 2, and most of the 14 pupils who are in Years 3 to 6 are taught as one group.

St Lawrence House, which is on site, is the school's boarding provision providing 22 places from Monday to Friday during term time. On this occasion, boarding provision was not inspected.

The school has an animal unit in the grounds, managed by the science department, providing various National Proficiency Test Council courses in animal care, agriculture and horticulture. The animal unit is used by other schools and a further education college as a resource for visits and separate courses. In relation to physical education, the school has the Football Association Charter Standard, ActiveMark and SportsMark. The link with the Skegness Sports Partnership provides a weekly after-school sports club. The school has Healthy Schools status.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to safeguarding procedures and the care, guidance and support of pupils are inadequate as a result. The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because it has failed to meet safeguarding requirements. The record the school needs to maintain of the checks it makes on the suitability of staff and others to work with children is not sufficiently complete. In addition, child protection procedures are not systematic and rigorous enough.

In every other respect, the school's effectiveness is satisfactory. It has several strengths, some of which are substantial, as a result of successfully maintaining the good features seen at the time of the previous inspection and the improvements made since then. The excellent work of the animal unit enriches the curriculum, strengthens partnerships and goes from strength to strength. Satisfactory progress in refining the tracking of pupils' progress gives the school valuable data to use in planning. A rigorous evaluation of data, leading to a good understanding of progress, is yet to be fully achieved. However, everyday assessment of pupils' progress has improved and is reliable. The curriculum is good and good progress has been made in extending the choice of accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management are satisfactory but improving in some key areas, such as in the emergence of a strong senior leadership team and the wider development of leadership roles. While this has not had its full impact on the school, particularly as self-evaluation lacks some robustness, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory. Leaders have identified the priorities for school improvement but their planning to achieve these lacks the detail on the actions required to gain success. While teaching and learning are satisfactory, the amount of good teaching observed shows most teachers are responding positively to leaders' higher expectations.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy learning are satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress, which at some points in their school career is good, because of effective teaching and support for learning, particularly from the speech, language and communication staff. However, the overall quality of teaching is not consistent enough to guarantee good progress continues over time. In some respects, pupils are provided for, cared for and supported well by staff in school and during residential hours in St Lawrence House. As a result, their personal development is good, in particular their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However some of

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the procedures for ensuring safeguarding are, as yet, incomplete and do not meet statutory requirements.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure safeguarding requirements are met as a matter of urgency.
  - Increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
    - making a rigorous evaluation of pupils' performance data
    - using pupil performance data to set challenging targets aimed at enabling the majority of pupils to make good progress.
  - Strengthen leadership and management by:
    - increasing the amount and rigour of lesson observations and ensuring that improvements in teaching are driven through quickly
    - setting out in detail the actions needed to achieve the priorities in the school development plan
  - further developing the role of governors in challenging the school's performance, especially in relation to pupils' progress and improvement in teaching and progress, in achieving the school's development priorities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The school's data on pupils' attainment and progress has increased in detail and is analysed more systematically than it was at the last inspection. Over the past three years it shows that, while attainment is low, the proportion making good progress is increasing and the large majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this is not how the data has been interpreted by the school, the observation of progress in lessons confirmed that progress is satisfactory overall. At times, pupils make good progress when teaching is well planned and challenging. This is especially so in the class for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, where teaching is so good it overcomes the significant demands of pupils' different needs, capabilities and ages. Pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties are supported expertly, learning effectively and making good progress in literacy. They are then well placed to make best use of learning opportunities throughout the school. Whatever their learning difficulties each pupil is included and enabled to make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils are managed well and their work is planned at least satisfactorily according to their needs.

Pupils are prepared well to leave school through effective transition arrangements which ensure they all move in worthwhile directions such as further education and training placements. They gain accreditation in many subjects and benefit from especially useful experiences in animal care, agriculture and horticulture. Pupils develop the confidence and skills to manage new and different demands, having learnt about and dealt with working life in their experiences at school. They are well aware of staying safe and

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maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop into well-rounded individuals with a positive outlook, particularly towards being helpful and contributing to the welfare of others.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Many teachers are improving their approach to teaching and for a this is now having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers' planning is detailed and made effective by ensuring a strong link between the aims of the lesson, the work pupils are given to do and what they learn. Pupils' various learning difficulties are properly taken into consideration. Activities are made lively, enjoyable and engaging for pupils. Teaching assistants are purposeful in supporting learning. A sharp focus is kept on assessing progress, particularly by teachers and assistants testing pupils' understanding by thorough skilled questioning. While all the teachers know the right ingredients of an effective lesson, not all combine these effectively to make learning opportunities challenging. In some lessons, work slips towards activities teachers know pupils can do and these lack the challenge to promote learning and progress at a strong pace. The

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<sup>1</sup> 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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advice provided by therapists about how to support pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties is used effectively by some teachers to plan work.

The curriculum has several strong elements. These reflect senior leaders' aspirations to develop a curriculum which is imaginative and creative. In this respect, the animal unit is excellent because it inspires pupils, gives them good work-related experiences and encompasses a breadth of learning opportunities. The Key Stage 2 curriculum, art, music and physical education all stand out because of the good learning opportunities and the breadth of experiences they provide. These are supported well by extra sports and cultural experiences.

Pastoral arrangements are managed well and linked effectively to residential provision for those pupils who spend time in St Lawrence House. Other good features in the care, guidance and support of pupils include the attention given to pupils' health and safety in the animal unit, risk assessments for off site visits and in particular the way they are prepared for leaving school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders share a common sense of purpose and have a clear vision for the school which is about raising expectations and the pace of improvement. Most staff have greeted this challenge with enthusiasm; those who are hesitating are slowing improvement, especially in raising pupils' achievement. Governors are closely in touch with the work of the school and are increasingly effective in their questioning and in challenging leaders. Senior leaders form an effective team that has made some headway in improving teaching and learning. They are successfully extending leadership roles and there are some strengths in the way the school is led. For example, the tracking of pupils' performance and improvement to the curriculum is developing well. The development of the animal unit and in providing for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties is a particular strength. In contrast, there is some lack of thoroughness in management such as the failings in safeguarding procedures and the lack of detail in improvement planning which means that actions are not sharply focused. The school is well established in the community, having forged good links with parents and made many profitable partnerships. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It tackles discrimination well and is effective in promoting equality of opportunity.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The large majority returning parental questionnaires hold positive views of the school. Particular views, strongly expressed, are that their children enjoy school, they are kept safe and that, as parents, they are happy with their children's experience at St Lawrence. Although inspectors found safeguarding procedures to be in need of the school's urgent attention, this does not negate the views in parental questionnaires on the benefits their children enjoy. Inspection findings largely support parental views.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horncastle St Lawrence 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	70	14	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	70	15	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	48	23	46	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	44	25	50	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	62	18	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	48	22	44	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	62	18	36	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)	27	54	15	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	68	14	28	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	66	12	24	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	54	20	40	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	64	15	30	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	72	13	26	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horncastle St Lawrence School, Horncastle, LN9 5EJ

Thank you for the warm welcome we received during our inspection visit; a special thanks also to the group of pupils who met with an inspector to share their views of the school. You told us many good things about your school and you also had good things to say in response to the questionnaires we gave out to pupils.

The inspection confirmed that you enjoy school. Your lessons and all of the activities you do add to your enjoyment, especially work in the animal unit, art, music, physical education and sports. You often learn a lot and make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics, which is preparing you well for leaving school. We were impressed by the confidence and skills you develop by the time you are ready to leave school.

While the inspection found that much in your school is satisfactory and some things are good, the school had to be judged inadequate overall. This is because it has not met all the government requirements to keep you completely safe and inspectors treat this very seriously.

We have given a number of recommendations to your headteacher and governors. We have asked them to:

- make sure they do everything they should to make sure you are kept safe
- help you to make better progress by improving teaching and setting you challenging targets to achieve
- plan in more detail the improvements your headteacher has identified for the school.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector

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