

Hickling CofE VC Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121043
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339843
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs N Hewitt
Headteacher	Mr Peter Wallis
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector spent about a third of the time observing learning, visiting six lessons and observing three teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. The inspector received and analysed 24 parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing and for higher attainers, and the impact of the school's efforts to raise standards
- the development, balance and creativity of the curriculum
- the headteacher's workload compared with the delegation of responsibility to middle leaders
- the quality and use of assessment and its impact on pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Hickling is significantly smaller than most other infant schools. Pupils come from Hickling and two other small villages, Sea Palling and Waxham. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. A well above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a statement of special educational needs. Pupil mobility throughout the school is low. There are two classes, one for Reception aged children and Year 1 pupils and the second for Year 2 pupils. There are 3 part-time teachers who job share, with one temporarily covering a maternity leave. One of the part-timers was not working on the days of inspection. The headteacher spends about 60 percent of his time teaching. Most children attend the village playgroup. Because there are few infant-aged children, the school roll is falling. The school has the Activemark award. Pupil numbers are very small, so national data about achievement and attainment is statistically unreliable, and should be treated with caution.

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

In this small and welcoming village school, pupils receive a good quality education. They enjoy learning and are well motivated to do their best, saying, 'We like school, learning is fun'. The skilled and forward-thinking headteacher has a steadfast focus on further raising standards and pupils' progress. Children's level of skills on entry to the Reception class is generally in line with age related expectations, being lower in creative development and strongest in attitudes, personal and physical development. However, cohorts and numbers vary year on year. Currently, almost all Reception children are summer-born. They are, however, making good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in speaking and listening and social skills. They confidently explain their often imaginative and mature ideas. Phonics sessions help them to effectively develop their emergent writing. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good so children get a positive start to their education. Good teaching continues through the school, with outstanding practice modelled by the headteacher. This builds impressively on pupils' ideas, interests and understanding, so that their progress is good and sometimes better. Current standards of attainment are improving and mostly above average. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable is good, due to the focussed, often one-to-one support they receive. However, the staff are not yet fully confident at getting to grips with analysing attainment data or using it to focus on smarter individual targets to accelerate learning outcomes, especially in writing and to challenge higher attaining pupils. Additionally, the use of marking is inconsistent in enabling pupils to understand how they can best improve the content and presentation of their written work.

Pupils enjoy discovering new skills. They have the opportunity to do this through the increasingly imaginative curriculum that is starting to impact well on their learning. Reading is enjoyed and pupils regularly select new books from the library to read at home. Pupils behave well at all times, readily offering help to each other. Instructions are followed promptly, with pupils often working in 'pin-drop' silence. They enjoy sharing their views and respect others' opinions. Attendance is satisfactory rather than good because some families take term-time holidays. Pupils are fully involved in community and parish life. There are some wider and global links, mostly through fundraising. Pupils like to be healthy and are keen on sport, with some good skills seen in an after-school badminton group. They feel safe, well cared for and able to ask adults in the school if they need help. Parents are supportive of their children's learning at home and school. They are extremely positive about their children's confidence, enjoyment and progress in learning.

The governing body has developed well since the last inspection and governors have a

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clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The headteacher is at the helm of the schools' ongoing development. However, the part-time middle managers do not take sufficient responsibility for sharing this very considerable workload. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, previous report issues are fully addressed, pupils' progress is good and standards are now rising, so that capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the leadership role and accountability of the part-time middle managers by:
 - delegating areas of responsibility for aspects including special educational needs co-ordination, assessment and tracking, attendance and extended schools
 - ensuring that they regularly monitor, evaluate and review their areas of responsibility to further raise standards, achievement and pupil outcomes.
- Make greater use of assessment information to raise achievement, particularly in writing and for higher attaining pupils, by:
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' use and understanding of data and of pupils' levels of attainment, and using the information gained to improve planning
 - setting specific targets that are revised as pupils achieve them
 - using consistently informative marking that helps pupils to know how well they have done and how to improve their work independently.

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

Pupils are happy, inquisitive and enjoy challenging their teachers and each other with exceptionally mature questions. This was seen when the youngest children and pupils observed a picture and debated whether one of the figures might be God's wife, mother or perhaps the mother of Jesus. Pupils think their teachers are good at helping them when they find learning hard. They say they like doing work in their 'writing at home books'. They also say 'they have to listen to their teachers' and they understand that they are expected to work hard.

Attainment by the end of Year 2 in recent years has been broadly average. However, current standards seen in lessons are mostly above average, although too much reliance on worksheets has hindered the opportunity for extended, creative writing and the development of handwriting. This is an identified area for development. Staff are not yet fully confident in analysing or using attainment and tracking data to set precise targets for learning, or to accurately know and build on pupils' levels of attainment, including that of higher attaining pupils who say work is often easy. Current Reception children and Year 1 pupils are progressing exceptionally well in their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils have a good grasp of mathematical concepts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils like working independently but are

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less confident in improving their own work.

Behaviour is good and pupils build positive relationships with their classmates and adults in the school, adding much to the calm learning environment. Pupils say they feel very safe because they are taught how to look after themselves, including by visitors such as the community police officer and paramedics. They have a strong understanding of health, diet and fitness and know why it is important to 'warm down' after exercise. They enjoy participating in the weekly after-school sports club. Pupils are proud of their school choir and there is a waiting list for the weekly art club. Pupils make a good contribution to the parish and local community through helping to design traffic calming signs in the village and by fundraising and regularly visiting a home for older people. They like talking to an elderly villager who visits and used to attend the school. They raise money for global and local charities, including Amnesty International. Pupils know that prejudice and discrimination exist in society and are keen to learn even more about other cultures and lifestyles. Year 2 pupils are excited about moving on to junior school, because the staff prepare them well by answering their questions and pre-visits start well ahead of transfer.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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

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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How effective is the provision?

Teachers' use of questioning, their subject knowledge and ability to build on and capture pupils' imagination and ideas to develop learning are significant features of the good or better teaching. In lessons, teaching assistants support learning effectively. The skilled one-to-one attention given to the most needy pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities allows them to overcome their barriers to learning. Teaching increasingly develops in ways to inspire and entrance pupils, for example, 'jumping' into a picture to explore it more closely, leading to a cascade of ideas and wonderful sentences. Occasionally, teachers spend too long talking so that time is reduced for the real business of learning. Peer assessment is developing well in physical education lessons, with pupils giving helpful pointers for improvement. There is evidence of some assessment in lessons, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but marking across the school is inconsistent with some work unmarked or praise given for careless presentation. This leads to pupils being unsure about how to improve their own work.

The curriculum has been reviewed to provide wider opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity across subjects, engage in thinking and develop their basic skills. It meets their needs well. Information and communication technology is used well and is accessible to pupils in lessons, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils greatly enjoy physical education enriched by a good uptake of sporting activities, through the Activemark status. The school funds sports coaching and makes good use of local leisure facilities. Different faiths are celebrated and the school is well resourced, including multicultural learning materials. The curriculum is carefully adapted to match individual needs. Visits and visitors significantly enrich pupils' awareness of life beyond their local area. Good use is made of facilities available within the school cluster group and this has a positive impact on pupils' social and personal development.

Pastoral care and support are strengths of the school. The staff know the pupils and their families extremely well. They put the pupils first and are committed to helping them to achieve and succeed. There is a wide range of external support and advice available, including speech therapy, to enable pupils to focus on learning. There are well-established links with the village playgroup and with the receiving junior schools to ensure a smooth transition process.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The determined headteacher, working steadfastly with staff, has successfully developed the focus on raising pupils' achievement and attainment so that outcomes for pupils are good. The school has rightly identified that it has more to do to raise the achievement of higher attainers, and to further improve writing. There is a clear improvement plan based on the most important priorities, thorough data analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Standards are rising in all aspects of the school's work.

The governing body has moved on well since the last inspection and now has a good overview of the schools' performance, providing challenging support to the headteacher. However, the part-time middle managers have yet to share more of the headteacher's excessive workload and take on a wider management role, including monitoring and evaluation, beyond subject responsibilities. The school is at the centre of its community and has forged many links with a wide range of schools and local businesses to broaden pupils' views. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory because although the school has a clear action plan to extend its links, global aspects are less well developed. All pupils are treated fairly and equally and specific needs are met well. Safeguarding is good and meets current government requirements. Governors are well-trained in aspects such as child protection and in their responsibilities for health and safety. Parental partnerships are good, with supportive parents closely involved with and informed about their children's learning. Resources and finance are well-managed.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Children get off to a flying start to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their personal development is enhanced by sharing their class with Year 1 pupils who set a good example to them. Most children already know each other from attending the local playgroup, settling quickly into routines that help them to feel well cared for and secure. Their concentration levels are good and they persevere when faced with challenges. Their speaking, listening and thinking skills are particularly good and they almost all communicate fluently. They make good progress and most are ready for more focused learning as they start Year 1. Teaching is good, as is knowledge of the needs of very young children. They are encouraged to be independent but there is an over-reliance on using worksheets. Planning and assessment do not always build consistently on children's prior attainment to provide rigorous enough information about their progress. Resources and the curriculum are good and enrich children's experiences. Children say there are lots of toys to play with. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are good and parents are kept well-informed and involved. Leadership and management are good.

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

Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire all say that they are kept well informed and supported to help their children's progress, that their children enjoy school and that their needs are fully met. Additionally, parents believe that teaching is good, and that their children have healthy lifestyles. Almost all parents are reassured that their children are safe, behaviour is good and that the school is well led and managed. The inspector fully agrees with parents' extremely positive views of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hickling CofE VC Infant 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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 34 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	63	8	33	0	0	1	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	54	11	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	50	12	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	67	8	33	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)	13	54	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	54	11	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	46	9	38	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	50	10	42	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	63	8	33	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	71	7	29	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.



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hickling CofE VC Infant School, Norwich, NR12 0XX

I would like to thank you for making me feel so at home when I visited your lovely school recently. You told me lots about why you like school and learning, particularly staying fit, helping each other, using computers and the art and sports clubs. You could not really think of anything you did not like. I can see that you work hard and that you find learning fun.

You make good progress in learning because you have good teachers and teaching assistants who help you to do your best in lessons. Your behaviour and attitudes are good and I can see you all take very good care of each other. Your attendance is only satisfactory because some of you go on holiday in term-time. Your attainment is similar to that of pupils in other infant schools.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that your written work is always marked so that you know what you do well and how to improve what you find hard, without too much teacher help. I have also asked teachers to decide how well you are doing and set you regular targets to help you to make even better progress, so that you are always challenged to do your best and no-one is given work that is too easy. I would like you to work hard at improving your handwriting and making sure your work always looks neat. Finally, I have asked your teachers to share out some of the work that your headteacher has to do, so that he can perhaps spend a bit more time to enjoy being with you.

I am sure that you will continue to find learning fun at Hickling and rise to the challenges you will be set in the future.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

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