

# Hilgay Village Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 121072       |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Norfolk      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 339855       |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 6–7 May 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Nick Butt    |

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>                      | Primary                                 |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled                    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 57                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mr Wayne Gowler                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mr James McBurney                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 23 November 2006                        |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Church View<br>Hilgay<br>Downham Market |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01366 387685                            |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed three teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work, and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 30 parents and carers and eight staff.

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

- what the school is doing to secure more higher levels in writing
- the consistency of teaching and learning in mixed age classes
- the impact of recent changes in the leadership of the governing body.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a wide rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with hardly any from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision takes place in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

The school has had several changes of teaching staff in recent years and the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school outside normal times is larger than usual. The school lacks an assembly hall.

**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

Hilgay Village School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are strengths in aspects of their personal development, such as in their good behaviour and in the contribution they make to the school and wider community. Pupils' attainment is broadly average, and they make satisfactory progress from starting points that are typical for their age. The school does not challenge more able pupils sufficiently, particularly in writing, and for this reason too few of them attain the higher levels. There are good links with parents, who support the school very well, and some strong partnerships with other organisations have benefited pupils both personally and in their learning. For example, a project with the BBC involved pupils interviewing local residents about their changing community.

Teaching is satisfactory, enabling pupils to develop the basic skills they need. There is variation in the extent to which teachers plan work that is well suited to pupils' needs, particularly in mixed age classes. Tasks are often routine and not that imaginative, which means that opportunities are missed to promote pupils' independence and to involve them more actively in their learning. Pupils are not always clear about their individual targets, especially to improve writing. The curriculum is enriched well, with a good range of clubs and visitors to school. Pupils produce interesting projects on topics such as Australia and World War II, although they only occasionally extend their writing across a range of subjects. The school cares well for pupils, valuing them as individuals and ensuring there is good provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they make good progress.

The impact of leadership and management on teaching and learning is satisfactory, as leaders form an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Monitoring is mainly informal and not sufficiently rigorous or systematic to accelerate progress. Most of this is done by the headteacher, with some involvement of other staff. The appointment of a new Chair of Governors has brought a clear sense of direction to the governing body, with the introduction of new systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work and set priorities. These are at an early stage of development, but their impact is evident in governors' willingness to challenge leaders and to ask searching questions. The school's progress since its last inspection has been sound and leaders have a satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement.

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

- Improve attainment in writing across the school, especially at the higher levels, by:
  - giving more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing across different

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subjects

- setting clear individual targets for pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve.
- Ensure that more teaching is good or better by:
  - planning work that challenges all pupils, especially the more-able
  - injecting more pace and creativity into lessons
  - developing pupils' independence so that they are more actively involved in their learning.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by:
  - involving all staff in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work
  - ensuring that strategic plans have detailed and measurable criteria for successful outcomes
  - building on the new systems introduced by governors to support their role as an effective critical friend.
  - 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**

Pupils enjoy school; confirmed by all parents and carers who returned questionnaires. They like being part of a distinct community, where 'you know most people'. They are keen to learn and display good attitudes in lessons, especially when they are able to take an active role. Year 1 pupils enthusiastically worked with apparatus to solve subtraction problems together. Year 6 pupils said how much they enjoyed making models of Anderson shelters as part of their Britain at War project. In too many lessons, pupils are asked to complete worksheets, which does not promote their independence or challenge the more-able sufficiently well.

Pupils' attainment in national assessments at the end of Year 2 is broadly average and they generally make satisfactory progress to leave with at least average basic skills by the end of Year 6. Small cohorts mean there is variation between year groups, so that there was a swing below average in 2008, and this year standards are above average in Year 6. However, too few pupils attain the higher levels in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive from teaching assistants.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe, including promoting road safety. They have a basic understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking part in the many opportunities for sport the school offers. Gymnastics is limited by a lack of equipment, especially for the older pupils, as lessons have to take place in the village hall. Pupils behave well and show respect to one another and adults. They make a positive

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contribution to the school community through the school council and as team captains. Pupils took a leading role in 'positive play week'. They play a full part in village life, joining in with the village green project, contributing their views about a new play area and enjoying such Norfolk traditions as 'Molly dancing'. Attendance is good and the school prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good, as they reflect the school's values. Much of their understanding of diversity is through the curriculum rather than direct experience, although pupils are working with a group from Ukraine to find out more about that country and its people.

*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:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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                      | 2        |
| <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>3</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>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## How effective is the provision?

Relationships are good in class and pupils say, 'There's always someone to ask if we have a problem with our work'. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, but sometimes opportunities are missed to assess their progress at the ends of lessons. There is a very wide range of abilities in the mixed age classes, and teaching does not always challenge the more able pupils to extend their learning. There are some good

<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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examples of marking, with some clear guidance about writing, but this is not reinforced by setting pupils specific targets for improvement. The curriculum has breadth and balance and contributes well to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school through interesting clubs, visits and visitors. A recent workshop run by a celebrity chef went down particularly well. Pupils have been involved in arts and culture projects, such as work on China with the British Museum. Whole year groups are learning the clarinet. Pupils took part in a Shakespeare project that involved workshops and seeing 'the Scottish play'. This stimulus produced some good writing. In general, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their writing, nor do they use technology enough across different subject areas.

Pastoral care is good, as staff know pupils and their families very well, and pupils new to the school settle in quickly. A good range of interventions support a variety of needs, including developing pupils' social skills. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they do well in meeting the targets on their individual education plans. The school works effectively with a range of outside agencies that provide additional support and guidance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is driven by raising standards. Accurate self-evaluation has led to strategic plans that identify the correct priorities for improvement, but do not state in sufficient detail how the school will judge its success in tackling them. The responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work lies too much with the headteacher, as systems have not been put in place to release other staff to support this work. Governors are beginning to take a greater role in holding the school to account for its progress, given renewed impetus by the recently appointed Chairperson. Their systems are not fully developed. The school enjoys good partnerships with other local schools, and a range of organisations, which provide opportunities for pupils to develop their academic and social skills. It includes all pupils well, but more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to attain the higher levels in writing. Consequently the promotion of equality is satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are good, save some minor recording relating to the premises. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, having a good awareness of its local context. It is at an early stage of giving pupils direct experience of the diverse cultures

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represented in the United Kingdom, although they have a growing awareness of how people live in other parts of the world such as France and the Ukraine.

*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:<br>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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</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> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and secure in the Reception class and experience all areas of learning. Their achievement is satisfactory. They join the school with skills and abilities that are similar to those typically found in four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception year they are mainly reaching the early learning goals for their age. There is an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity, although sometimes the focus of learning is not made clear. Teaching is satisfactory and ensures children have a variety of interesting resources to choose from. They particularly enjoy the space capsule role play area and dressing up as aliens. The outside space has been improved from its previous inadequate state but does not fully enable pupils to learn across a range of areas. Staff carry out careful observations of children and record these in 'learning journeys'. These build up a useful picture of children's development, although there is insufficient attention to what next steps may help children to extend their learning. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory with staff working together closely as a team.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| 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

Parents are mainly positive about the school and many help as volunteers or through the Friends organisation. All those who returned questionnaires agreed that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe. A few parents queried how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, but inspection evidence found behaviour to be good. Six parents disagreed that the school was led and managed well, but inspectors judged the impact of leadership as satisfactory and noted recent improvements in the work of the governing body.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hilgay Village Voluntary Controlled 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 19             | 63 | 11    | 37 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 17             | 57 | 13    | 43 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 15             | 50 | 11    | 37 | 4        | 13 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 16             | 53 | 11    | 37 | 1        | 3  | 1                 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 15             | 50 | 10    | 33 | 3        | 10 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 16             | 53 | 13    | 43 | 1        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 15             | 50 | 13    | 43 | 2        | 7  | 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) | 12             | 40 | 16    | 53 | 2        | 7  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 18             | 60 | 8     | 27 | 4        | 13 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 8              | 27 | 15    | 50 | 7        | 23 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 7              | 23 | 18    | 60 | 5        | 17 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 13             | 43 | 11    | 37 | 6        | 20 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 15             | 50 | 12    | 40 | 3        | 10 | 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

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.**



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hilgay Village Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Downham Market, PE38 0JL

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. The school gives you a satisfactory education and here are some of the things that are good about it.

You know about staying safe and behave well.

You get on well together and get involved in school life and in the village.

Your attendance is good.

There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.

The school cares for you well.

There are good links with your parents and with other organisations.

We think your writing could be better and have asked your teachers to give you targets to help you improve and to make sure you get to do lots of writing in different subjects. We want those of you who find work easy to have to think hard, so we have asked your teachers to see that you are suitably challenged. We also want you to be more involved in your learning, and to take a more active part in lessons. We have asked your headteacher to involve all staff in checking how the school is doing. Governors also have an important job to do and we want them to carry on with the changes they have started to help the school improve even faster.

You can help by telling your teachers what makes you learn best and suggesting things you would like to find out.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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