

Hilgay Village Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church View, Hilgay, Downham Market, PE38 0JL

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress and are attaining above-average standards in reading and writing and broadly average standards in mathematics. Progress in writing is, currently, exceptional.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and benefit from work that is matched precisely to their abilities.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils work hard during lessons and show exceptional care and respect towards each other and towards adults.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well.
- School leaders are working effectively to improve the quality of teaching and rate of pupils' progress. The governing body provides good support and is knowledgeable about the school. Leaders have ensured the school's improvement since its previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- For younger pupils, standards in reading currently lag behind those for writing and mathematics.
- By the time pupils leave, their attainment in mathematics is, usually, not as good as that for English
- There are times, usually at the start of lessons, when teachers talk for too long, restricting pupils' opportunities to engage in discussion, to answer questions and to think for themselves.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations that pupils will present their work as neatly as possible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 11 lessons. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during 10 of the observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher and assistant headteacher, pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also spoke with parents.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed it with them. He also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspector also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector considered the 18 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views and 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and speakers of English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational need is close to twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average – but few in number.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave part way through their primary education varies from year to year, but is currently above average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes; one containing children from the Reception Year and Year 1, another in which pupils from Years 2 and 3 are taught together and a third for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- There are not enough pupils on roll to make a valid judgement on whether the government's current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress are met.
- The school shares its headteacher with the nearby Ten Mile Bank Primary School. During a typical week, the headteacher spends about two and a half days at Hilgay Village.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress, raise standards and improve the quality of teaching by:
 - reducing, when appropriate, the time taken by teachers talking to the whole class, especially at the start of lessons, so that pupils can be involved more in discussions, in answering and posing questions and in working things out for themselves
 - focusing more closely on improving the quality of reading for younger pupils
 - developing the mental and oral mathematical skills and knowledge of older pupils and creating more opportunities for them to apply these skills and knowledge in solving mathematical problems
 - raising expectations that pupils will always present their work as neatly as possible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Each year the standards attained are influenced, to some degree, by the small numbers of pupils in each year group and by the rising proportion of pupils who start or leave the school midway through their primary education.
- Children enter the Reception Year with knowledge and skills, albeit with some variations, that are broadly typical of their age group nationally. Some pupils join later than Reception and, overall, their entry ability is often lower than that usually found.
- Children make good progress during their Reception Year and usually join Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average. The best progress is evident in aspects of personal development, communication and language, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school also caters well for the physical development of these children.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2011, attainment was broadly average. A fall in standards in 2012 meant attainment for this age group was below average. However, from their various, sometimes low, starting points, pupils' progress in both years was good. This pattern of good progress is being sustained in the current year, with lower-attaining pupils, those disabled and those who have special educational needs making the most progress. While standards in reading and writing are on course to be below average, standards in writing are broadly average. This picture is affirmed by the work seen in pupils' books.
- By the end of Year 6, when pupils leave, there is a well-established pattern of the majority of pupils making, at least, expected progress, with a favourable proportion exceeding expected progress. There was a glitch in 2011 when standards fell below average, because of the average ability of that year group, which included some pupils who joined the school towards the end of the year with low attainment, giving the school little time to influence the progress they were able to make.
- For the current Year 6 pupils, attainment in reading – and especially writing – is above average. Their standards in mathematics slightly lag behind, but are broadly average. These pupils have all made at least the expected progress from their various starting points. Their progress in writing is exceptional and is clearly illustrated by the work seen in pupils' books and during lessons.
- Pupils in all years enjoy reading. However, the early learning of letter-and-word sounds (phonics), while having a significant impact on pupils' progress in writing, has not resulted in the same rapid progress in reading for current younger pupils. The majority of older pupils read to a level exceeding that expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- Pupils who are eligible to free school meals and, therefore, to the pupil premium, progress well because of the support they receive. However, there were not enough Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 to make reliable evaluation of their attainment in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils benefit greatly from being taught in the mixed-age classes, which enable pupils of similar ability but different ages to work together. Within classes, teachers often regroup pupils for different subjects, providing them with work that is invariably matched precisely to the stage that pupils have reached and to the National Curriculum levels they are moving towards.
- Teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress accurately. They ensure pupils are fully aware of how well they are progressing. Pupils know the level they have reached and precisely what they need to do to attain the next level.
- Accurate assessments also ensure that any pupils who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified. Teachers plan work that is matched precisely to the needs of these pupils and the majority are usually soon back on course. Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to this aspect of the school's work when they teach these pupils individually or in small groups.
- The teaching of letter-and-word sounds by teachers and teaching assistants is making a significant contribution to raising standards in writing. This is because teachers and teaching assistants always insist that pupils place the words they learn into sentences and add extra sentences, resulting in increasingly sustained pieces of writing. This good practice, while raising standards in reading for older pupils, has not impacted fully on the reading of younger pupils because there has not been the same focus given to developing their reading skills.
- Within the context of pupils' writing, teachers do not always insist on pupils' producing work that is presented to the level of neatness of which many are capable. Consequently, although pupils want to achieve their best in all aspects of their work, they are not made aware enough of the importance of presenting all their work to the very best level of which they are capable.
- Pupils enjoy discussions and enter into debates with great enthusiasm. There are times, usually at the beginning of lessons, when teachers miss opportunities to encourage debate or do not involve pupils sufficiently in discussing their work and in thinking for themselves. This sometimes applies in mathematics, when teachers too readily provide pupils with answers, rather than giving them time to discuss processes and to work things out for themselves.
- Teachers are highly effective at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils value opportunities for reflection, especially during religious education lessons and during visits to the nearby church. Pupils also appreciate the celebration of their efforts and successes, which gives them the confidence to work hard and do their best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well during lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes and when participating in additional activities. They also work hard during lessons and strive to do their best. They are rightly proud of their achievements and often spontaneously celebrate each other's successes.
- Behaviour is also managed exceptionally well and there are high expectations that pupils will behave well at all times. A small number of parents say they feel behaviour is not as good as it should be. However, there have been no pupils excluded for some considerable time. The headteacher says, 'Children manage their behaviour by the standards they set.' He is correct. Pupils show great care and respect for each other and for adults.

- In most years, attendance is above average. This year, it is broadly average, mainly because of a virus that affected many pupils during the autumn term. Attendance is currently climbing back to its previously above-average level.
- The majority of parents think their children are safe at school, although a small number feel otherwise. Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe. They are knowledgeable about bullying in its various guises and recognise the potential hazards posed; for example, by the internet or by the misuse of mobile phones. Pupils say on the isolated occasions that bullying does occur, their understanding allows them to resolve it for themselves, but that they can also rely on staff to resolve issues amicably.
- Pupils make a highly effective contribution to all aspects of school life. They are proud of the influence they have as members of the school council, they prepare the classroom for daily assemblies and lavish great care on the school's garden and chickens.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, staff and the governing body are ambitious and dedicated to the continued improvement of the school and to ensuring that no pupil is in any way disadvantaged. A strong track record since the previous inspection of improvements in pupils' progress, in the quality of teaching and in the work of the governing body provides a positive indication of the school's capacity to improve in the future.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and plans for continued development identify precisely what the school needs to do to maintain the pattern of improved provision.
- Leaders have promoted improvements in teaching effectively. These improvements are linked appropriately to the management of staff performance and, in the case of teachers, to the national teaching standards. Rewards for teachers are also tied in closely to improvements in pupils' progress.
- The majority of parents have positive views of the school, although a small minority are unhappy with some features of its work. For example, they question the provision of homework, the degree to which work is hard enough and the management of behaviour. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns. Communication with parents is excellent and includes attractive weekly newsletters, details of what pupils will study each term and frequent newsletters from the governing body. In practical terms, parents are very supportive of the school. The 'friends of the school' raise significant funds and are always ready to help with projects. For example, in partnership with the governing body, they played a central role in renovating the attractive outdoor area used by the youngest pupils.
- Pupils' learning is supported by a good range of subjects and additional activities. Good attention is paid to the development of pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and to their personal development. However, there is a tendency for the reading of younger pupils to lag behind their attainment in other areas. Provision for children in the Reception Year meets their personal and academic learning needs well. All pupils benefit from being taught French, from learning to play brass instruments and from access to a variety of after-school clubs and educational visits, including a residential visit for older pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils understand and value the qualities and experience brought by those who come from different backgrounds and cultures. Pupils organise fund-raising events for school projects and to support

those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils appreciate and understand the school's strong links with the church, and have a remarkable understanding of current environmental issues.

- The local authority has contributed effectively to school improvement. It played a central role in brokering the school's partnership with Ten Mile Bank. The two schools share their headteacher and benefit from working together on the continuing professional development of staff. Pupils also greatly enjoy opportunities to work with their fellow pupils from the partner school.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very supportive and is a great advocate of the quality of the school's work. Governors are regular visitors. They help in many ways, such as by listening to pupils read. They also observe at first hand and evaluate the quality of provision. Governors have eagerly embraced training opportunities helping them to become increasingly knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work. They ask pertinent questions about areas for improvement and hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and manage staff performance well, linking rewards to pupils' progress. Governors ensure the school meets the current requirements for the safeguarding of pupils. They are fully aware of how the various strands of the school's available funding are used, including knowing how the pupil premium funding is used and how it is making a positive difference to the progress of those pupils who are eligible to benefit.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121072
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401998

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Nicholson
Headteacher	John Ward
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2010
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