

Howden Church of England Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118121
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	358267
Inspection dates	11–12 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev James Little
Headteacher	Miss Jane Cawthorn
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, the latest reports to the governing body from the School Improvement Partner, the most recent national and school data on attainment and progress and on attendance. They studied children's work from the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as samples of pupils' work from other age groups. In addition, 68 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were analysed, along with those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How well all pupils are learning, especially those in Key Stage 1.
- Whether the improvements in the quality of the curriculum and teaching have done enough to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.
- How successful the leadership team has been in setting challenging targets for all pupils.

Information about the school

Howden is slightly smaller than the average-sized infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school has gained national recognition for some aspects of its work. These include, the Activemark, Healthy School status and Investors in Pupils.

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

Howden Infant is a good school. It enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils enjoy school and this is shown by their above average attendance. Many children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age but by the end of Year 2 their attainment is above the national average. The school nurtures pupils' all-round development well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with excellent assemblies reflecting the school's Christian ethos. The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and to which they contribute to the community are both excellent. The school maintains a broad and enriched curriculum and it has made a start in linking subjects together imaginatively. However, the more formal curriculum offered in Year 1 does not always fully meet the needs of some pupils moving up from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The care, guidance and support are good overall, and the pastoral element is outstanding. Staff know all pupils and their families very well and ensure that their needs are fully met so that pupils can learn effectively. Good quality displays of pupils' work adorn walls and corridors. Teaching is good. Teachers create an atmosphere of 'can do', which helps pupils try new and different ways to learn. Pupils' learning thrives on empathy, trust and respect. Staff give lots of praise which motivates pupils. However, marking and targets are not used consistently to help pupils' learning move forward. Sometimes in lessons, the teachers' input goes on for too long and this restricts the time pupils have to work independently. Very occasionally, opportunities are missed to use ongoing assessment in lessons to fully meet pupils' needs. This is particularly the case for higher attainers.

The school is well led by the headteacher and a recently strengthened senior leadership team. Morale is high and teamwork is strong. The supportive and satisfactory governing body is increasingly knowledgeable about the school, but it is not yet fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school to help it hold the school to account in all areas.

The school has a number of strong features which explain its good capacity to improve further. These include an embedded tracking system which helps teachers check regularly on how pupils are doing, development planning that is sharply focused and a strong track record of above average attainment over a number of years. The school gives good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better in all lessons by:

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- where necessary, limiting teachers' input at the start of lessons to allow pupils to become more quickly and more fully involved in active independent learning
 - consistently marking pupils' work in such a way that makes it crystal clear how they can improve
 - capitalising even more frequently on opportunities in lessons to assess pupils' progress as they learn and adapt teaching to meet all pupils' needs, especially those of higher attainers.
- Ensure a smoother transition into Year 1 by some pupils through maintaining some of the informal learning methods featured in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
 - Ensure that the governing body is more fully and rigorously involved in evaluating the school in order to hold it more effectively to account for all aspects of its work.

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

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, which has a positive impact on their achievement. Their behaviour in lessons is good and attendance is above average. This helps to ensure that they make good progress as they move through the school. This, together with good teaching, contributes well to pupils' overall above average attainment by the end of Year 2. Evidence from lesson observations during the inspection indicates that pupils are on track to reach above average attainment again this year. Higher attaining pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. However, on those few occasions when there are some minor weaknesses in teaching their progress can be slower than other groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, largely because of the good support they receive.

Pupils collaborate well and are given many opportunities to use speaking and listening skills to improve their understanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their response to their studies of the artists Klimt and Monet and their resultant feelings typify the extent of their development. These are summarised perfectly in the writing of one pupil, 'It is great to be me in this world because it is an amazing place with beautiful flowers'. These developing skills, together with pupils' personal and social skills add much to pupils' achievement and to their development as 'well-rounded' individuals, preparing them well for their future lives. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and energetically join in the many sporting opportunities which the school offers. The older pupils, accompanied by an adult, often come to school on their scooters, and they say this 'helps them start their day happy and healthy.'

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school community and they take on responsibilities, such as helpers and play leaders, with maturity and enthusiasm. Their improving skills and confidence ensure they contribute outstandingly to the local community through their involvement in eco matters and by conducting a traffic census.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching has enabled the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. Throughout the school relationships are good and pupils respond well to the praise and rewards they are given. In the most effective lessons, regular, rigorous assessment enables teachers to know the ability and needs of their pupils and appropriate targets are set. Skilled teaching assistants provide a variety of good support to pupils who require help to make progress. In the majority of lessons there is an emphasis on developing spoken language and this is achieved very effectively through good questioning by teachers and the extensive use in most classes of collaborative work in pairs and groups. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities that provide them with the skills to be independent learners. In a small minority of lessons, however, teachers spend too long talking to pupils instead of involving them in their own learning. In these lessons, ongoing assessment of pupils' progress is not as strong. This means that tasks are less finely tuned to pupils' needs, especially those of the higher attainers. Most marking is helpful to pupils and points out ways to improve their work, but inconsistencies remain and a small minority of pupils remains unclear how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is effective overall and mostly meets the needs of the school community. A few pupils, however, find it difficult to adapt to the more formal approach to learning in Year 1. The curriculum ensures that pupils' basic skills, including literacy, numeracy, problem-solving and information and communication technology (ICT), are the central

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focus of learning. Through topic work and the sensible use of blocking time, the school enables these skills to be applied effectively in a variety of contexts. For example, 'India Week' was an entire block of time devoted to the study of India across the curriculum. This engaged and motivated pupils and this is reflected in their good topic work, displayed around the school. A range of good partnerships, including the local network of schools and sports partnerships with a local specialist high school, help to enrich the curriculum and make strong contributions to pupils' personal and physical development.

The general care of pupils, including safeguarding procedures, is good. Pupils are known as individuals by staff and the school provides a very safe and welcoming learning environment. High quality provision and skilled teaching assistants ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well met. Good support from external agencies is provided for pupils who require it. Transition arrangements are good overall, especially from Nursery to Reception and on to junior school. Excellent case studies and discussions with those pupils, whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable, indicate the high quality of care they receive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision of the purpose and direction of the school. She is fully supported in her vision by the deputy headteacher, staff and the governing body. It is shared with all members of the school community, including the pupils. Everything that the school undertakes is driven by this vision, which is captured in the school motto, 'Roots to grow and wings to fly.' This strength of leadership has created a very purposeful community where all are ambitious for the school's success. Targets are challenging and the overall progress of pupils is carefully monitored by managers and teachers. The engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. The Family Learning programme not only brings parents and carers to school to learn, with their children, the new ways of learning in literacy and numeracy, but it also gives them a sense of pride in the school. This is borne out in the many positive remarks that parents and carers wrote on their questionnaires, which are typified by one parent who wrote, 'a brilliant example of what a school experience should be. Expectations are high and children are encouraged to reach them in a happy, exciting environment'.

The governing body is supportive of the school. It is well organised, knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and understands the challenges and opportunities facing it. Members of the governing body are increasingly active and visible in the school. However,

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their knowledge of strengths and what needs to be done to improve the school even further is largely gained from what they are told or from what they read rather than from first-hand experience. This limits the governing body's effectiveness.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures fully met requirements. All safeguarding documents are current, very thorough and user friendly. They cover all aspects and are known by staff in school. The school acts promptly on any issues brought to its attention. Collaborative working with key agencies to broker support and to provide training is effective. The school's work in promoting equality of opportunity is good. Equal opportunities are embedded well in the school's way of life, an aspect which pleases parents and carers very much. Discrimination is not tolerated: pupils are helped very well to understand how to treat others with consideration and respect. To help pupils to develop inclusive attitudes, community cohesion has been developed to enable pupils to meet with and experience a variety of faiths and traditions. The school made an audit of its locale and has drawn up an action plan that has enabled the rapid development of links with schools of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below age-related expectations, particularly in relation to emotional development and their communication, language and literacy skills. Continuously improving provision has enabled children to make accelerated progress, so that by the end of the Reception Year their skills are in line with those expected of children preparing to join Year 1. This represents good progress and is attributable to good teaching, planning and a range of stimulating activities. There is a good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills supported by very skilled teaching assistants. Resources are good, and both the indoor and outdoor areas

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are well used. Many opportunities are provided for the development of children's independence and ability to make choices. Children particularly enjoy using their 'roving rucksacks' with their wealth of resources, from which children choose to enhance their work. Therefore, children have positive attitudes to learning, behave well and are considerate of others.

The leadership and management of the provision are good. The coordinator is enthusiastic and has created a strong staff team. She has a good overview of the provision's strengths and areas that require improvement, and welfare arrangements are good. Assessments of children's progress are good, with parents and carers invited to make a contribution to their children's progress record. There are extremely good links with parents and carers who are very positive about the quality of the provision and the good arrangements for children's entry to the Nursery.

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

The percentage of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire is about average. Responses were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Several parents and carers chose to write comments and the vast majority were very positive. Typically they said, 'This is an excellent school. We are very pleased with the staff who work hard and how the school is run. It is a very open school and the staff treat children wonderfully. Children very much enjoy the after-school clubs and the extra sporting activities.' They felt that behaviour is good and that children are very well looked after.

The very few parents and carers who voiced concerns commented on boisterous play. While it may be that a very small number of parents and carers have genuine concerns in these areas, almost all parents and carers in the school did not identify this as an area of concern. During the inspection, inspectors found that behaviour was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howden Church of England 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 inspection team received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	78	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	76	16	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	82	12	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	75	17	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	79	14	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	79	13	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	75	17	25	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)	49	72	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	57	29	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	71	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	75	17	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	79	14	21	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howden Church of England Infant School, Howden, DN14 7SL

Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed visiting your lessons and listening to what you had to say. Many of you told us that you like school very much and believe that you go to a good school. We are pleased to say that we agree with you! We especially liked the friendly atmosphere and the way in which staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. You behave very well in lessons and around the school, and work hard. You know about the importance of staying healthy and keeping safe. Most teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress.

We have found a few things your headteacher, teachers and the governing body should do to make your school even better.

- I have suggested ways to help them further improve teaching and learning. For example, to make sure that you are not sitting on the carpet too long before you get the opportunity to do some interesting work.
- I found that when you go into Year 1, some of you find it a bit hard to get used to the different way you are taught, so I have asked the teachers in Year 1, to carry on with the way of learning that you are used to in Nursery and Reception, at least for part of the year, until you settle into the 'big school' ways.
- I have asked the governors to visit more often so they can see for themselves the good things that are happening in your school, and anything which is not quite as good, so that it can be sorted out straight away.

Thank you again for being so helpful when we inspected your school. It was really good to find you are happy and doing well.

Yours sincerely,

Ronald Cohen
Lead inspector

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