

# The Hackthorn Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Hackthorn, Lincoln, LN2 3PF

**Inspection dates** 24–25 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make exceptionally good progress as they move through the year groups.
- Children in the Reception class receive very effective help and soon gain confidence so that they develop a genuine love of learning.
- Teaching is outstanding and brings out the best in each pupil. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and pupils rise to meet these, because they are given a strong belief in their own capabilities.
- All pupils, including those newly arrived, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who receive additional funding, make excellent progress. Their abilities are quickly assessed and skilled support is put in place where needed.
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and respect for each other are outstanding. They willingly take responsibility for others and feel very safe.
- The school gives pupils many interesting and stimulating learning experiences, including trips and visits which bring topics to life.
- Every pupil is involved in school productions, which helps to motivate them and contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership is outstanding. Leaders are highly committed to continually improving the school, and their vision has instilled a deep commitment to learning in each individual within the school.
- Staff support for the longstanding headteacher has driven up standards and improved the quality of teaching across the school.
- The governing body plays an important and successful role in supporting and challenging the school, to help secure improvements.
- The school continues to improve very well. One of the areas the school is currently working on is to simplify the tracking of how well Reception children are doing, in order to keep an even closer check.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, in all of which the headteacher was present. He was either teaching, assisting or sharing views with the inspector. All of the staff responsible for teaching were seen. The inspector also observed support sessions for pupils who need extra help with their learning.
- The lead inspector was present for one school assembly, which celebrated pupils' achievements and was also attended by several parents and carers.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in class, and observed older pupils supporting younger pupils with their reading. She spoke informally with pupils during the inspection, gathering their views and experiences of school life, and also met with the school council. She spoke with the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body, and held separate meetings with four other governors, a school improvement adviser and school staff, including the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- The inspector noted the views of 25 parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey. She also spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school, and noted the contents of two letters received.
- The inspector analysed the contents of 11 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the school's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

- Hackthorn is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than average join the school during the school year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average and the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, are more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have been eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to compare the school's performance with the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Put into practice the plans to include all assessment information for Reception children in the school's electronic tracking system, so that all teachers can clearly see pupils' progress from their starting points.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are often below expectations for their age. They quickly settle into the stimulating classroom and outdoor area and rise to adults' high expectations of their learning. Children embrace the school's routines and become confident, keen learners, making securely good progress.
- Year 1 pupils consistently achieve results that are well above national expectations in the annual screening check on their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). No pupils repeated the test in Year 2.
- Attainment varies from year to year because of the small number of pupils in each year group. Current school data shows that more pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach higher levels of attainment in all subjects than in 2013. This shows broadly average results in reading, writing and in mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has generally been above average in recent years.
- Though pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 did not make such rapid progress, those currently in the school are achieving extremely well. They are making outstanding progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The most able pupils are being very effectively challenged and school data shows they are making very rapid progress.
- There were no pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 last year to compare their attainment with that of their classmates. Equivalent pupils currently in the school achieve extremely well and gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates are closing quickly. They are currently working at similar levels to their classmates in writing and mathematics, are edging ahead in reading and are making excellent progress. The additional funding is used effectively to provide highly skilled teaching support staff who lead extra sessions daily.
- Pupils' standard of reading has continued to rise consistently through the school and is now above average for most of the groups currently in the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes and high levels of enthusiasm about reading. They keenly compete to read their way up to the most difficult books in each class.
- Writing standards are high, and writing is woven into all class activities, visits and topics studied. Pupils have written a detailed letter and set of interview questions which have been added to the application pack for a new, senior member of staff. They write for a range of purposes with competence and confidence and use their own active learning experiences and interests to stimulate exciting pieces of writing. Initial drafts are in rough books and pupils check and amend their work carefully, before writing it up neatly and accurately in their books.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to great effect to research and find information. They say that this helps them to work efficiently and to keep on improving. Many attend the ICT club after school and pupils have created some impressive animations.
- In numeracy, pupils have excellent opportunities to apply their skills and they learn to select their own methods to solve problems, demonstrating how well they understand. Their skill in applying previous learning, across a range of topics, to develop understanding in new topics contributes well to raising their achievement.

- The new additional sport funding is used well to develop and enhance teachers' and pupils' skills and to bring exciting and different sports into school, such as cheerleading and lacrosse. Sport has an increasingly high profile in the school and every pupil represents the school at a sporting event.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive exceptionally good-quality support, from early on, and achieve very well as a result. The use of additional funding, to provide training for teaching assistants to support smaller groups daily, has been highly effective in promoting these pupils' success.
- Pupils joining the school part way through the year soon settle into the welcoming, family environment and they quickly catch up with their classmates, making at least good progress.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- School leaders have placed a strong focus on ensuring high quality teaching and learning. This is one of the main reasons why the quality of teaching and its impact on learning has continued to improve and is outstanding. The expectation that pupils help themselves and others to learn is paying great dividends in terms of the atmosphere and enjoyment of lessons.
- Teachers and other adults communicate their high expectations and lessons are packed with an excellent variety of challenging activities and opportunities for pupils to be involved throughout. Pupils are highly engaged by working with others and by the imaginative and creative contexts which lie at the heart of their lessons.
- Children in the Reception Year soon start to make their own choices and become deeply involved in different learning activities. They regularly use prompts around the room and resources in and out of the classroom to help develop their skills and understanding and are encouraged by their older peers in the mixed age classes. Adults encourage pupils to help each other, such as 'spelling buddies' where older pupils teach and coach younger ones to improve their spellings, early reading and writing. This prepares them well for moves up to different year groups.
- Pupils know what is expected of them and learn exceptionally well. They immerse themselves in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills, across different subjects. They are highly responsive when teachers and supporting adults question them closely to encourage them to think more deeply, and they are skilfully helped to work things out for themselves.
- Teaching is greatly enhanced by the effective use of an excellent range of resources, including computers, tablets, interactive whiteboards, and other technological equipment. This provides a variety of interesting ways for pupils to learn and helps to prepare them for their next steps when moving on to secondary school.
- Teaching assistants make a huge contribution to pupils' excellent learning and progress. They know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs, providing the right amount of support at the right time. As a result, they help to ensure that all pupils make the very best progress that they can and run additional, daily support sessions for those who need them.
- Teachers very effectively link activities with pupils' overall targets so that they understand exactly what is expected of them and how they can achieve greater success. Pupils say they understand what they are aiming for and find it helpful to use prompts about how to succeed when regularly reviewing and checking their own work. They readily show that they have the

highest motivation to achieve their absolute best. They thoroughly enjoy showing how well they have done in the weekly achievement assembly.

- Marking across the school is thorough and pupils receive their most helpful feedback through spoken comments during lessons. Where written comments are made, they refer to what has been achieved and what must be done to make further progress.
- Pupils understand that homework set supports and extends their current learning. By the time they reach Year 6, homework becomes a more formal and integral part of their studies.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and act responsibly in managing their own behaviour and helping with that of others in the school. The highly active school council regularly check the 'worries, wishes, wants' box and respond to the concerns of their peers in school. Pupils freely express their views about standards of behaviour and the importance of showing respect for each other, and this message is quickly embraced by those joining partway through the year. This contributes to the friendly, family atmosphere of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe in school and outside, are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of misusing the internet. They readily refer to school assemblies and talks which have raised their awareness, and are particularly passionate about safe parking outside the school. School councillors regularly patrol in high-visibility jackets and take note of any cars which are parked in a way they judge unsafe.
- Pupils are exceptionally positive in their attitudes to learning and take great responsibility for helping others. Older pupils buddy younger ones on the weekly swimming trip during the summer term helping them to get themselves ready, and volunteer as monitors to check that toilet rolls and paper towels are ordered and readily available.
- Parents, carers and staff agree that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils' attendance levels have risen since the last inspection and are now above average because the school is quick to follow up absences, and staff dissuade families from taking holidays during term time. The school works closely with parents and carers, and has provided transport for those who have found it difficult to get to school to attend important meetings
- Bullying is very rare but is dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand that if they cannot resolve conflicts themselves, they can rely on staff to intervene quickly. Racist language and discrimination in any form are not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. The school buildings and grounds are impressively litter free, and pupils have places where they can sit quietly and reflect. Pupils say that there is always something to do. Boxes of different equipment are labelled for each day to ensure variety; even in poor weather pupils play together and make structures out of building blocks on the carpeted areas in-between the two classes. Pupils all speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being a part of the school and this is evident in their very smart appearance, and their impeccable manners.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- School leaders have been highly successful in continuing to improve the school so that all aspects of its work remain outstanding. They work together with a clear vision and commitment to continuous improvement. Their high expectations are reflected throughout the school.
- Leadership roles have strengthened since the last inspection and the headteacher and two senior teachers apply their extensive experience and skills to successfully lead literacy, phonics and numeracy across the school. The successful appointment of the coordinator for special educational needs has secured excellent improvements in achievement for this specific group of pupils. Staff are resoundingly positive and feel part of the leadership team.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and acts quickly to address any gaps so that the speed of improvements remains rapid. School development plans are realistic and sharply focused. In the Reception group, for example, an analysis of how to accelerate progress to outstanding has identified the need to have closer monitoring of pupils' progress. Plans to improve the recording of assessment data are underway but have yet to be completed.
- Plans to raise standards are linked to close checks on the quality of teaching, learning and progress and these are shared by all staff in the school. Excellent staff training, and a commitment to the school vision, have led to marked improvements across the school. Leaders make sure that teachers' pay and targets to improve performance link directly to whole-school priorities and pupils' progress.
- Activities in lessons are supplemented by a variety of different extra-curricular clubs and activities. These are enhanced by involvement in music and drama productions in which every pupil participates. Performances are very thought provoking and a recent modern interpretation of 'The Bible' was highly praised and was filmed, with DVDs sold.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness exceptionally well and the promotion of health through sport has a high profile, with more pupils than previously attending clubs.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer.
- The school improvement adviser has only recently started to work with the school and is supportive of its successes and culture of support for each individual child. Previous advisers have helped the school to improve its assessment systems and worked alongside teachers to check how accurately they mark and level pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly committed to continuing to improve and to maintaining the popularity of this now oversubscribed school. The governors work very closely with school leaders to ensure that high quality teaching remains at the heart of the school's work. They have an excellent understanding of information on pupils' progress, and undertake regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills.
  - Governors use the most recent data to make comparisons with other schools, locally and nationally, and understand the nature of their school, so are aware of the impact a single pupil can have on reported results. They actively question school leaders where dips occur and know the story behind each pupil's achievements. They meet with key staff, and make regular visits to check directly on important areas of the school's work, also involving themselves in the running of school clubs, such as ICT and knitting.
  - Governors ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, know how the pupil premium and sports funding are being spent and monitor the impact of these initiatives on achievement. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are reviewed

carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. They are highly motivated and visible in the school and check that safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120572
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	444319

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Benson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mel Oyston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01673 860295
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