

Helpringham School

Highgate, Helpringham, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 0RD

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have improved considerably the quality of teaching since the last inspection. It is now consistently good.
- The headteacher ensures that all teachers have high expectations of every child.
- The skilled subject leaders of both English and mathematics are helping their colleagues to improve their skills further. They give the governing body useful information on the impact of staff's actions and what needs to happen next.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement are accurate. Teachers use these to plan lessons to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Three-year-old children settle in quickly and work alongside their older peers happily in a safe and exciting learning environment. All groups of children make good progress in the early years. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development is consistently higher than the national average.
- Attainment in the rest of the school is at least in line with the national average, and often above this, across different subjects.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress. Pupils learn well and develop good levels of knowledge across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils are kept safe and behave well. They are thoughtful, kind and respectful. Their work is neat, and they are polite and respectful to others. They have ambitious aspirations to succeed in life.
- The school has a well-deserved reputation for pupils' participation in sport. Pupils take part in a wide range, and very large number, of external sporting events and festivals.
- Parental satisfaction is high. Parents and carers said that staff are approachable, their children are happy at the school and pupils are taught well. Parents feel listened to and communicated with well.
- Due to some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in the past, a small number of pupils in key stage 2 have some gaps in their English and mathematical knowledge.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by making sure that:
 - teachers quickly fill the remaining gaps in knowledge and skills for the small minority of pupils in key stage 2 whose current attainment is not sufficiently high.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has ensured that Helpringham School has improved considerably since the last inspection. The leadership team has created an aspirational school for all pupils. This is captured in the school's motto, 'Strive to achieve'.
- Staff have a strong sense of unity and purpose. They work in shared ways and learn from each other. All those who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire submitted strongly positive responses to each question they were asked. Staff are very proud to work together at Helpringham.
- The headteacher's systematic and determined approach has ensured that all of the former weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been convincingly eradicated. Leaders expect all teachers to teach well. The school's performance management system makes staff accountable for the good or better progress that leaders insist every pupil must make.
- The headteacher has given the subject leaders for English and mathematics good training and support, and they have received help from external consultants and from the local authority, to enable them to become effective in their roles. They are given time to monitor the quality of teaching and to scrutinise pupils' workbooks. They give the governing body accurate information about this, and about what actions are needed next for further improvement.
- The subject leaders for English and mathematics give colleagues effective guidance on, for example, teaching mathematical reasoning more effectively, or how to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to a wide range of vocabulary to use. Any teacher who is less confident or less effective in an aspect of their role is receiving good additional support to help them to improve quickly.
- The curriculum is appropriately balanced and engaging. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about weather patterns and how to use a simple compass, and about the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study time zones, topographical features of landscapes, and Buddhist beliefs and culture. The curriculum is supplemented by much-enjoyed visits to places such as Lincoln Castle, which make learning come alive for pupils. Provision is further enhanced by a range of after-school clubs, which develop pupils' talents and interests, such as the 'golden mile' running club, multi-skills, gardening and problem solving.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective about a wide range of moral issues and understand well the consequences of their actions. Pupils also learn about a wide variety of different cultures and religions. They show a good understanding of how a single community has many similarities and needs, but how some of these needs are sometimes in conflict with each other.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of British values. The inspector saw a Year 6 class assembly in which pupils were explaining these in a highly articulate way. Pupils explained how, for example, that individual liberty is linked to the need for law, which

protects people from making bad decisions that harm themselves or others. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Senior leaders spend the pupil premium well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good overall gains from their starting points.
- Senior leaders ensure that the primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is spent wisely. The school holds the silver school games mark for its high levels of participation in sport. Last year, the school took part in over 30 sports events and festivals in sports as diverse as lacrosse, rowing, golf and triathlon. The vast majority of pupils in key stage 2 attend at least one external sporting event.
- The coordinator for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils have good additional support. Staff work with external agencies when needed. They meet with families of these pupils regularly to keep them well informed. They are also careful to help those pupils transfer effectively either within the school or to move on to secondary school. Funding is spent well to help these pupils.
- Leaders and staff have the strong support of parents and carers across a wide range of aspects. All the parents with whom the inspector met were warm in their praise for all aspects of the school's provision. In addition, responses to the school's own recent questionnaire to parents and those received from Ofsted's own survey were highly positive. Parents believe that staff keep their child safe and happy, and that he or she is taught well. They were particularly keen to explain that leaders and staff are approachable and take note of what they think. Nearly all who expressed a view would recommend Helpringham to others.

Governance of the school

- The governing body plays its strategic role well. Like leaders, governors refuse to accept any complacency. They hold leaders to account stringently because they receive good and detailed information about how different groups of pupils are achieving. Governors are unafraid to challenge leaders further where any group of pupils does not make sufficient progress, or gain the skills they need to succeed.
- Governors visit the school regularly to meet leaders and to see the school in action.
- Their monitoring of school actions, including the use of additional funding, is thorough and well embedded.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff understand that their greatest responsibility is to do all they can to protect pupils. Staff are well trained so they know how to spot potential warning signs of harm to a pupil and how to report this to leaders. The school's system of record-keeping is logical and detailed.
- Leaders work with parents by giving them plenty of good information on the school website, and by organising useful information evenings on aspects such as e-safety. Leaders are quick to let parents know of any potential risks from any pupils using, for

instance, a video game which is unsuitable for the primary age range.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have a good understanding of the expectations appropriate for the age groups they teach. They use this knowledge to plan work that is sufficiently challenging for pupils of different abilities, including those who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The assessments that teachers make of what pupils can do and of how much progress pupils have made are accurate overall. The very small minority of teachers whose assessment is not as precise as it needs to be are receiving good support to help them judge pupils' attainment and progress consistently well.
- Teachers ensure that pupils present their work neatly. Staff remind them they must always remember the school's '3 Ps' of pride, presentation and positive behaviour. Children's written work in the early years and pupils' exercise books from across key stages 1 and 2 are completed with care.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have the skills they need to make further gains. In line with the school's policy, pupils' workbooks confirm that teachers give pupils good guidance on, for example, their grammar and punctuation. Staff help pupils to correct misconceptions so they do not make the same mistake again.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is sound. Pupils see that teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. They use correct technical vocabulary so pupils quickly learn terms such as a 'noun phrase' in Year 2. As a result, pupils speak confidently about their own, and others', writing. For example, the inspector heard pupils in Year 3 pointing out that the letter they were reading 'should have used a capital I because it's a personal pronoun'.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and mutually respectful. Staff make clear that it is important to listen and concentrate and for everyone to do their best. On the rare occasion when a pupil loses focus, teachers address this quickly.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well. They give pupils the help they need but build their independence over time by insisting that pupils do as much as possible for themselves.
- Staff teach phonics consistently well. This is matched by teachers' effective approach in introducing new words to pupils, which they both understand and use. For instance, the inspector saw how pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class explained the meaning of, and gave synonyms for, words such as 'malevolent' and 'transfixed'.
- Teachers develop in pupils an enjoyment of books. Pupils with whom the inspector met told him they enjoyed reading books, such as 'Kensuke's Kingdom' and the Narnia stories, as well as a wide range of poetry.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff ensure that pupils develop increasing self-confidence as they grow older. Pupils of all ages are inquisitive and want to find out as much as possible. They enjoy being challenged in their work and realise they cannot always get an answer correct at their first attempt and must persist through concentration and thinking hard.
- Pupils have ambitious but achievable aspirations in life. They told the inspector of their future career plans, and how they wanted to develop personal skills and sporting talents.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and very much enjoy the many opportunities they have for physical exercise. They understand the concept of a 'balanced lifestyle' and make sensible choices when eating.
- Pupils have a secure overall understanding about how to stay safe. Staff teach them about, for instance, 'stranger danger', and how to swim. Staff also teach pupils about how to stay safe online. They know they should never arrange to meet someone they do not know personally. Pupils understand they should tell an adult immediately if they receive a photograph or message that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Classrooms are purposeful and positive places where staff make learning both interesting and fun. As a result, pupils pay attention and do not disrupt the learning for others.
- Pupils behave well around school. Breaktimes are happy social occasions when pupils mix and get on together positively. When playing games, they demonstrate good levels of team spirit and gamesmanship. Pupils value the school and look after their own and others' property. At the end of breaktime, they line up calmly and return to their classrooms, ready for their next lesson.
- Pupils like coming to school to learn. 'Reggie the Register Monkey', the school's toy mascot, encourages them to attend regularly. The class with the highest attendance each week has the treat of looking after Reggie in their classroom. Over the past four years, including currently, pupils' overall attendance has been broadly in line with the national average. It remains slightly higher for disadvantaged pupils.
- Last year, the level of persistent absence rose to above the national average. It was particularly high for disadvantaged pupils. However, the headteacher has worked well with the parents of those pupils who do not attend often enough, so their children now come to school more regularly. The level of persistent absence has fallen this year to much closer to the national average, and is continuing to reduce.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Until 2016, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was in line with, or significantly above, the national average. Although attainment fell in 2016, it improved last year so the proportions of pupils attaining at least the expected standard in all subjects were at least in line with the national average. This year, proportions have risen again and are now above the current national average across different subjects. The proportion of pupils attaining a greater depth of understanding has also risen. In reading, this proportion is in line with the current national average. In both writing and mathematics, proportions are now above this.
- Pupils across key stage 2 have historically made progress which was at least broadly average. In 2016, this fell to below average in mathematics, and well below average in reading. Last year, pupils' progress was average once again in both writing and mathematics, but remained well below in reading. During the inspection, the inspector looked at substantial samples of work from different year groups and, in each, from pupils of different abilities. These matched leaders' judgement that pupils overall are now making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In both 2016 and 2017, attainment at key stage 2 was broadly in line with or above the national averages. Teachers have assessed similar or higher proportions than the current national averages to have attained both the expected and higher standards this year. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good overall progress. They catch up with others nationally by the time they leave Year 6. This year, teachers have assessed the proportions of disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 6 cohort who are achieving at least the expected standards to be once again broadly in line with the current national average. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities also make good gains.
- Pupils develop secure understanding of phonics. Those pupils the inspector heard read used good strategies to try to pronounce words they did not recognise. For the previous three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average. This year, this figure is very close to the current national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard by the end of Year 2 is consistently above the current national average.
- Pupils make good progress in science. As a result, their attainment at both key stages 1 and 2 has been above that seen nationally for the past two years.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make good gains in learning a modern foreign language. Pupils learn a wide variety of vocabulary and converse in French, using both formal and informal language to, for example, say how they feel, ask questions and respond.
- Lower-attaining pupils overall are making good progress. However, a small minority of pupils in key stage 2 have, historically, not received consistently good teaching over time. Some of these pupils lack the skills they need. For example, in mathematics, their understanding of place value is weak. In English, their use of vocabulary is limited and their grasp of both spelling and punctuation is not secure. Leaders have already devised plans for these pupils to receive consistently strong teaching so they will be able to catch up.

Early years provision

Good

- The two early years teachers lead well. They work with the leader of the pre-school to ensure consistency of approach between all staff and that every child can fulfil their potential.
- Teachers ensure that lessons are varied and exciting and build children's skills well. The inspector saw how some were, for example, throwing beanbags into hoops and then recording their scores, while others were improving their motor skills by using a pincer to pick up objects. Another group of children were writing the things they would need to pack in their holiday suitcase, such as sun cream and a rug. One child wrote, 'Fred, remember your hat!' with correct punctuation.
- Three-year-old children are integrated seamlessly so they learn alongside their older peers. The inspector noted how these children were writing or making kites in the same way as children in the Reception Year.
- The curriculum covers all areas of learning and is thoughtfully designed so children will see links between different types of knowledge. For example, children read 'The very hungry caterpillar' together and find out about mini-beast habitats and the life cycle of a butterfly. Children are inspired to cooperate after watching how ants work together to build a nest. Children then create an obstacle course together and move over and around it like, for instance, a snail.
- Teachers make good and accurate assessments of what children know and can do. Planning covers all the areas of learning appropriately. Staff adjust their planning to take account of the needs of different children.
- Staff are good role models for children. As a result, children feel safe and secure and speak to others courteously. They behave well and their attention span, including of three-year-old children, is good. They are mindful of the safety of others.
- Leaders use the additional funding well so disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities receive caring and effective support to help them to learn well.
- Staff communicate well with parents. They keep them informed about how their child is progressing in relation to the skills typically found in children of the same age. Parents are quickly alerted if these skills are below, or considerably above, others, so suitable tasks can be planned for these children. Parents with whom the inspector met told him how they appreciate greatly the school's weekly 'stay and play' sessions. They explained how these help them to understand the things their child, or grandchild, is learning.
- From their starting points, all groups of children, including the most able, those who need to catch up, are disadvantaged or who have who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress. For the fourth consecutive year, the proportion who attained a good level of development is above the national average. Children leave the early years well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	120379
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10047995

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Doughty
Headteacher	Andrew Canadine
Telephone number	01529 421676
Website	www.helpringhamschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@helpringham.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 June 2016

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The small number of pupils in the Year 6 cohort in 2017 meant that the government's floor standards did not apply to the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classrooms. A majority of lesson observations took place with the headteacher. In total, learning was observed in 16 lessons. The inspector also scrutinised examples of children's workbooks from the early years, along with a wide variety of pupils' exercise books for different subjects across key stage 1 and 2, including from a range of different groups of pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders and members of the governing body, as well as the subject leaders for English and mathematics, one of the two early years leaders, the head of the school's nurture group facility and the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The inspector analysed the 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, looked at the free text comments submitted by parents and spoke with parents at the end of the school day. The inspector also considered the views of the parents who had responded to the school's recent questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the school's information about pupils' achievement and attendance, and records of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Roary Pownall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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