

Highlees Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110768
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	337565
Inspection dates	15 - 16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Tim Bristow HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Millington
Headteacher	Mr Dan Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	14 - 15 May 2007
School address	Ashton Road Westwood Peterborough PE3 7ER
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Age group	4 - 11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents, a local authority officer and representatives from partner agencies. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, monitoring and evaluation documents, assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and 93 parental questionnaires..

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

- the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly in English
- the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stages 1 and 2
- the capacity of school leaders to embed ambition and drive improvements.

Information about the school

The school is above average in size. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are above average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is higher than average. More than the average number of pupils start or leave schools outside normal admission dates. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special needs is above average. The pupils benefit from a breakfast club and an after-school 'Jesters club' that is managed by the school. There is a local authority children's centre on the school site.

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

2

Main findings

This is a rapidly improving school. After the previous inspection standards of pupils work and behaviour fell considerably. In the last eighteen months the newly appointed headteacher and senior leadership team have worked very successfully so that standards of attainment are rising strongly and behaviour is now good. As one parent reported, representing the views of many, 'The headteacher and staff are second to none. The school is well organised – they are a credit to the education system.'

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Attainment in mathematics and science is broadly average. Standards in English have risen considerably, but they still remain too low. Progress is satisfactory overall and rapidly improving. For some significant groups such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language progress is now good. This represents a rapid acceleration in the progress of these particular groups of pupils. School assessment information and the work seen in lessons show that this improvement is continuing and is embedded in the work of the school.

Many of the outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is good, and this is underpinned by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils arrive and depart from this school throughout the year. Pupils are happy to take the responsibility for their well-being and work very considerately to ensure that they all settle well and are happy in school. Pupils' responsibility for their own safety and their adoption of a healthy lifestyle are good for their age. Pupils make a good positive contribution to the community. They relish the opportunity to take responsibility for organising events such as the school Christmas fair and charity fundraising activities.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and outstanding features. The school has made considerable improvements to lessons so that the quality of learning for all groups of pupils is satisfactory and for some it is good. Although the teaching is satisfactory, some groups of pupils, such as the more able, make less progress than they could. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The school offers a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities such as the residential trips for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, which they are very enthusiastic about. Teaching assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils so they make good progress. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the overwhelming majority of pupils are

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happy and thrive in this very caring environment. As one pupil reported, representing the views of many, 'I love working and learning and I'm ready to do it every day:'

With great determination school leaders, led by an extremely effective headteacher, have successfully eradicated the weaknesses that caused the sharp decline in standards and behaviour after the last inspection. They have created a very ambitious culture and positive team spirit amongst the staff. Rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school hold all staff to account so that rapid and sustained improvements are now embedded. Consequently the school demonstrates good capacity for improvement. The governing body is very supportive of the school, but governors are not yet fully equipped to hold it to account for some aspects of its work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils, and particularly the more able, make good progress in lessons by:
 - making better use of assessment information to pitch work more accurately to meet the needs of pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers learn from the good and outstanding teaching that exists in the school
 - making success criteria much more specific for each group of pupils
 - challenging the more able to be creative and independent.

- Raise standards in English by:
 - using the assessment information to identify common weaknesses in reading and writing
 - ensure that all teachers learn from the good and outstanding teaching that exists in the school
 - exploit links with other subjects so that pupils get regular opportunities to practise and apply their literacy skills.

- Improve the governance of the school so that it is better equipped to hold the school to account for its work in raising standards and improving teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that governors attend training provided by the local authority and the school
 - planning regular monitoring activities to evaluate the work of the school
 - working with the school and local authority to fill the vacancies in the governing body so that it has the full capacity to carry out its work.

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.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Challenging, but realistic targets set by the school have been instrumental in improving attainment. By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics and science are now broadly average. In English, although rising rapidly, it remains low because the proportion of more capable pupils with the potential to attain the higher level 5 in Year 6 is low, and because opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills are insufficient. The rate of progress made by pupils is accelerating rapidly. In Key Stage 1 progress is good. Consequently, the attainment overall is rising considerably so that in 2009, Year 2 pupils reached broadly average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements to the teaching of phonics have made a major contribution to this. Improvements in the quality of learning in lessons, school assessment information and the challenging targets set by the school demonstrate that the school is very well placed to continue this rapid improvement.

Other key features of pupil outcomes:

- Pupils' safety awareness is good. They maintain that bullying hardly ever occurs and are able to explain confidently the actions they would take if they needed help. Older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of safety issues such as 'E safety' when using information and communication technology resources. Almost all pupils report that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils' good behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are characterised by their mutual respect, kindness and consideration. Inspectors were impressed by the self discipline demonstrated by pupils, even by those who occasionally find it difficult to manage their behaviour. School records show that the high number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced considerably in the last two years and in the last academic year there were no exclusions. As one pupil accurately reported, 'Behaviour is much better now.'
- The pupils' good development in adopting a healthy lifestyle is demonstrated by the much higher than average proportion of pupils who choose to have a school dinner. Inspectors were impressed by the large numbers of pupils choosing to eat salads.
- Attendance is average because of the very good work of the school to ensure that many pupils whose circumstances render them vulnerable attend school regularly.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They demonstrate a high degree of responsibility when carrying out class or school jobs, for example, by sitting on the school council. It is expected by the school community that pupils will be consulted about their views when changes are to be made.
- Pupil questionnaires demonstrate that almost all pupils enjoy school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school's monitoring records show that there used to be an unacceptable minority of inadequate teaching. School leaders have successfully eradicated this so that teaching is now satisfactory overall. All lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils and conscientious planning that enables all pupils to make satisfactory progress. All teachers have benefited from the National Strategies in order to improve English and mathematics lessons. In the lessons that are good or better teachers expertly pitch work at the correct level for all groups of pupils so that the quality of their learning is good. Teachers use assessment information well to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. Where lessons are satisfactory, insufficient use is made of information about pupils' progress and performance to ensure that all pupils have work that will enable them to make good progress.

The curriculum covers all subjects adequately. Some cross-curricular links are evident; for example, information and communication technology is used successfully to help pupils to develop skills learnt in geography and art lessons. However, these links are not sufficiently exploited to give pupils the opportunity to practise their writing and their speaking and listening skills. Whilst the curriculum for some groups of pupils is well developed so that they make good progress it is not as helpful to the more able, or the gifted and talented pupils.

One of the very good features of care, guidance and support is the great attention

¹ 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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paid by the school to the needs of each individual pupil. For example, through the extra activities provided and the strong partnerships with other agencies that successfully develop the well-being of vulnerable pupils. A number of parents have expressed their pleasure with this. As one parent remarked, 'The school could not have done more.'

Other key features of provision:

- Teachers use individual targets with pupils effectively so that they can check how well pupils are doing and the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club, which is thoroughly enjoyed by those who attend. High quality care in a safe and secure environment is provided. Activities are successfully focussed on developing social skills and team work complementing the work of the school.
- The school's special educational needs coordinator, learning mentor, support staff for pupils who speak English as an additional language and other teaching assistants are a highly effective team and are instrumental in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is reflected in the useful school improvement plan which accurately prioritises areas for improvement and the actions that need to be taken. School leaders have been rigorous in ensuring that this plan is implemented successfully through activities such as the meetings held each half term with staff to check the progress being made by all pupils. Team leaders present very good role models to staff and demonstrate that they are well equipped to support and challenge teachers to improve their teaching.

In recent years the school has struggled to create a stable governing body as a number have resigned and been replaced. Governors have demonstrated that they are well equipped to oversee the health and safety of pupils and the maintenance of the school buildings and finances. They are not yet sufficiently able to hold the school to account for its work with regard to teaching, learning and achievement.

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Other key features of leadership and management:

- The school is successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination because of the great attention paid to the well-being of each pupil. In recognition of this the school has been asked to accept pupils who have had difficulties in other schools. In these cases the school can demonstrate that this has been very beneficial to the well-being of these pupils.
- The school currently has good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. The checks it makes on adults who work in school are exemplary.
- While the school has taken all the necessary steps to promote community cohesion, and has been successful in promoting a harmonious relationship with the local community, its understanding of the impact of this work is inconsistent. For example, it has successfully engaged the large majority of parents in its work but is not fully aware if there are still hard-to-reach parents who need to be more fully included in school life.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their very low starting points so that the gap between their skill development and expected levels in all areas of learning has narrowed considerably by the time they enter Year 1. In 2008 a large majority met or exceeded national expectations in all areas of learning. Good provision and care have ensured that after a short time in the Reception classes children feel confident and secure when taking part in the many stimulating and interesting activities

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provided for them. They demonstrate that independence and social skills are developing fast. The provision and welfare of children are good. Strong links are being established with the children’s centre, which is improving transfer arrangements to the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and ably supported by an experienced and highly skilled team of teachers and teaching assistants.

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 overwhelming majority of the parents’ questionnaires received were positive. Nearly all parents were happy overall with their child’s experience at school. All the parents thought that the school kept their children safe. Trends in the comments made by parents showed that they appreciate the recent improvements made by the school. A few parents voiced concerns about aspects of the schools’ work. There was no apparent trend to these concerns to indicate weaknesses in the schools procedures, nor were any witnessed by inspectors. Nevertheless, inspectors pointed out some of the issues of concern to school leaders.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highlees Community 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 278 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	55	42	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	56	41	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	44	48	52	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	46	45	52	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	55	41	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	42	45	45	48	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	38	51	55	4	4	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)	33	35	53	57	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	35	56	60	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	43	45	48	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	38	50	54	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	53	41	44	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	49	53	43	46	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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>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.



17 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Highlees Community Primary School, Peterborough, PE3 7ER

If you remember I came with my colleagues to inspect the work of the school and to check how well you were doing. Thank you for the help you gave us, we felt very welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were very friendly and polite. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the way that you care for each other. We agree with you that bullying is rare and that you are very safe in school. You try hard in lessons and you are doing much better this year. You take part in many interesting activities and clubs which you told us that you thoroughly enjoy. We think that you take your responsibilities to the school and to the wider community seriously and your contribution is valued.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are working very hard to improve your education and you are well cared for. Taking everything into account, we decided that yours is a satisfactory school.

To make things even better, we have asked the school to do the following:

- make sure that you learn even faster in your lessons.
- help you to improve your English.
- ask the school governors to check regularly how well you are doing.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard in lessons.

Yours faithfully

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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