

Hodnet Primay School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123373
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	380647
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2012
Lead inspector	John Eadie

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	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Russell
Headteacher	Caroline Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Eadie

Additional inspector

Tracy Stone

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 27 lessons and observed seven teachers. They spent nearly two-thirds of the available time observing teaching and learning. They met informally with parents and carers and had meetings with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the local authority advisory teacher for travelling children. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's website in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, policies and procedures, particularly those relevant to keeping pupils safe, and data giving evidence of the progress that pupils are making. Questionnaires returned by 60 parents and carers were analysed, as were others completed by 71 pupils in Years 3 to 6 and nine staff.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. A very large majority of the pupils are White British, although there is a small but significant minority, 6%, from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller families. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. There is an unusually high proportion of boys in the school, more than 60%. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is broadly average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. There is a higher than average proportion who have a statement of special educational needs. Government floor standards were not met in 2011. The school has suffered some significant disruption to staffing due to illness during the past year or more. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

The school provides accommodation for the village pre-school, but it is managed privately and will be inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. A major factor in this decline was some staffing problems, which have now been resolved and the school is improving well, though improvements have been too recent to enable the school to be judged good.
- Pupils' achievement, which declined to inadequate last year, is now satisfactory. The pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, though this is improving and is often good in lessons. Pupils' progress is good in reading and boys are particularly enthusiastic readers. In writing and mathematics, although pupils have targets, these are not sufficiently precise to enable them to know what they need to learn next.
- Much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, but this is not yet sufficiently consistent. The often-good teaching has been the key factor in pupils' recently improved progress. Where teaching is less successful, teachers do not use the whole-class sections of lessons sufficiently effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have particularly good attitudes to their learning, being keen and attentive even when teaching is less engaging. They respect each other and adults very well and are caring and considerate. All pupils spoken to said they feel safe in school.
- There are many good aspects to leadership and management and a number of good initiatives have been put in place, which are beginning to improve pupils' achievement. However, these are too recent to have had a major impact on pupils' performance. The provision of well-targeted professional development opportunities for staff has been an important feature in improving the quality of teaching. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not yet developed sufficiently in other subjects.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and, particularly, mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils are set targets for the next steps in their learning, matched closely to each individual's needs and abilities, that will enable

- them to know exactly how they can improve most quickly
- using these targets in lessons, so that pupils can check on the success of their own learning.
- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, so that they are consistently good by:
 - using the whole-class sections of lessons more effectively so that pupils are fully engaged and actively involved throughout lessons
 - making better use of teaching assistants in the whole-class section of lessons.
- Improve curriculum provision by ensuring that:
 - adequate time is given to all aspects of mathematics
 - pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy are planned to be developed in all other subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, though for many it is good. For instance most higher-attainers make good progress. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire regard their children as making good progress. Last year, on average, pupils were working about a term behind their peers nationally, but they have caught up and are now working at the levels expected for their age. Although attendance was above average last year, the key reason for the 2011 Year 6 cohort not reaching Government floor standards was due to absence during the tests and, particularly, that their learning was significantly disrupted during the year due to staff illness.

In many of the lessons observed, pupils made good advances in their learning. They are enthusiastic learners and said that teachers make their lessons interesting. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were enthusiastically weighing objects found in the classroom and more-able pupils were given a challenging task of producing packs of rice to a given mass. Excited discussion was evident as pupils tackled their tasks. Similarly, in an English lesson for older pupils when they were preparing persuasive arguments, much enthusiasm was evident as a very relevant task had been chosen – to persuade the headteacher that older pupils needed an afternoon break as much as younger ones. However, there are times when learning slows, as for example when pupils spend too much time sitting listening, rather than actively involved in learning.

Despite the preponderance of boys in most classes, boys and girls are making similar progress. In particular, the school has put in a number of initiatives to encourage reading, especially for boys, over the years and this has been very successful. Pupils make good progress and their attainment in reading is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and reach average attainment by the time they start in Year 1. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates, as careful plans are made for this progress and they are supported well to achieve their targets; this is particularly the case for those with statements of special educational needs. The school works exceptionally hard to ensure that the

children of Traveller families fit in quickly and make satisfactory progress when they return to school.

Quality of teaching

Records show that the quality of teaching has improved over the last six months or so. Much of the reason for this is a revised system of assessing pupils' progress. This has given teachers a clearer understanding of what pupils understand and can do. They are therefore more able to target their lessons to what pupils need to learn next and this has been one of the key drivers in improving pupils' progress. However, the targets set for the next steps in pupils' learning are not yet always matched accurately to individual pupils' abilities and needs. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires regard their children as being taught well.

There is a shared ambition amongst the staff to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. It is demonstrated in the way that they plan their lessons to try to ensure that pupils of all ability levels are catered for and are learning as well as possible. For example, in a mathematics lesson, there were no fewer than six tasks at differing levels. The school has developed a more-interesting curriculum, but is at an early stage in planning to enable pupils to develop their basic skills of literacy and numeracy in different subjects. Teachers plan well to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. For instance, they introduce them to a range of different cultures and set high expectations of their social and moral behaviour. Teachers cope with the mix of ages in classes well and there are regularly tasks at four or five different levels to ensure that all are working at appropriate levels. Lessons are usually structured well, with a good range of activities for pupils to undertake. There are times though, when pupils spend too long sitting listening, rather than actively learning, particularly in whole-class sections of lessons.

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. When pupils are doing their tasks in groups, the teaching assistants have good plans to extend their learning. However, teachers do not always plan well for the use of teaching assistants when they are conducting the whole-class sections of lessons and there are times when they sit and listen with the pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite, welcoming and considerate and they behave well both in class and around the school. Older pupils play happily with younger ones and there is little segregation at playtimes or in class when pupils are working together. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires also regard the standard of behaviour as good. A few expressed concerns about lessons being disrupted. When spoken to, pupils were confident that, although a few pupils find it difficult to behave well, lessons are rarely disrupted and when they are it is only very briefly as staff deal well with situations that arise. On the questionnaire for pupils, all but one regarded behaviour as being good in lessons. Pupils who were spoken to also considered that the behaviour observed by inspectors was typical. A particular strength of behaviour is pupils' attitudes to learning. They are keen and enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons.

There have been few incidents of bullying in recent times. The one incident of racist bullying reported in the last two years was dealt with well, with an outcome that satisfied the pupils concerned and their parents and carers. The very few other incidents recorded were relatively minor and dealt with well. Pupils who were spoken to were confident that bullying of all types is rare and minor and dealt with effectively. They are happy that there is always an adult to whom they can turn if they have a problem. Virtually all said on their questionnaires that they feel safe in school.

Leadership and management

There is a very clear commitment to continued improvement, shared by all staff and the governing body. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and it says much that the areas for improvement noted in this report had begun to be addressed before the inspection. Careful analysis of needs has resulted in good professional development opportunities for staff. Recent progress has been strong, but is not yet sufficiently embedded to be judged secure. The headteacher's vision has been shared well and all staff on their questionnaires strongly agreed that they know what the school is trying to achieve. The governing body contributes well to the process of improvement, being knowledgeable and supportive, whilst still challenging.

The curriculum is satisfactory, though it has been developed well to make it more engaging for pupils and better suited to their needs. For instance, the time for literacy has been increased with sessions for reading and phonics. The introduction of a weekly session called DEAR (drop everything and read), to which parents and carers are welcome, is popular and effective. The same consideration for extra needs in the mathematics curriculum has not yet been considered. Planning to incorporate the practising of literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects is also an area for development. The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development well. There are moments of awe and wonder and pupils learn well about other cultures in subjects such as religious education and geography. For example, pupils in Year 5 were creating inventive shelters in connection with their topic on an Indian village.

The school is extremely inclusive. A good example is that the local authority advisory teacher for Travellers' children was fulsome in her praise of the way that the school accepts new Travellers' children and welcomes them back after a time away. They are quickly enabled to be a part of the school and are given extra help to aid them to catch up. The school takes its responsibility to keep children safe very seriously. Procedures and policies are rigorous and the governing body keeps a watchful eye on these. Bearing in mind the progress being made and the shared drive for improvement, the school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hodnet Primary School, Market Drayton, TF9 3NS

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing how much you enjoy school and all that is provided for you. We think that your school is satisfactory, although it is improving.

These are some of the things we found about your school.

- You are making satisfactory progress and this has improved from last year, when quite a few of you were making inadequate progress. Some of you are making good progress and the progress that you are making in reading is good.
- Your progress is improving because the quality of teaching is improving. You told us that you enjoy your lessons.
- You behave well and are polite and considerate of each other. You told us that bullying is rare and, when it happens, it is dealt with well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governing body have good plans to improve your school further, though, at present, these plans are in their early stages.

There are three things we think need to be improved.

- You could be making better progress in writing and, particularly, mathematics if the targets set for you were matched better to your needs and abilities and were referred to more often in lessons.
- There are times in lessons when you spend too long sitting listening, rather than doing tasks that extend your learning.
- More time has been found for literacy, for example in guided reading, phonics, and DEAR sessions, but the same thought has not been put into how more time might be found for mathematics. Also, you don't often practise specific literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.

We are sure you will help to improve your progress by continuing to work hard. Perhaps you could ask your teachers how you can improve your work more often.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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