

Howes Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134426
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	360619
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeffery Rowe
Headteacher	Carol Brammer
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 14 lessons; all nine class teachers were seen at least once. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and two groups of pupils. Many pupils were informally spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed 87 parents' and carers' questionnaire returns, together with those completed by all staff and a sample from Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- The extent to which all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make sufficient progress.
- The consistency of progress of all pupils in Key Stage 1 and the degree to which attainment is high enough for all, including those of higher ability.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- How well all the children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated into the school.

Information about the school

This average sized school serves an area on the outskirts of Coventry. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, but there is a well above average proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The great majority are fluent English speakers, however. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities is much higher than in most schools because the school houses a Hearing Impaired Unit with places for 10 pupils. It also has an Enhanced Resource Nursery for children with multiple special educational needs as part of its Early Years Foundation stage provision, with places for up to 12 children. All children in these units have, or are in the process of receiving, a statement of special educational needs reflecting their specific learning difficulties or disability. Currently there are nine pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit and 10 children in the Resourced Nursery. The governing body also runs before- and after- school childcare clubs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools status, and Eco-school and Active Mark awards.

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

Howes Community School provides a good education for its pupils. Performance in national tests in English, mathematics and science has shown good improvement in the last two years and all the evidence indicates that this trend of improvement is set to continue. Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics develop well, though somewhat unevenly, throughout the school. Their use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all areas of the curriculum is a particular strength. These skills, together with their good personal attributes, prepare pupils well for the future.

School leaders track pupils' progress accurately, with the result that progress is good, especially so in Key Stage 2 where teaching is stronger. Boys and girls achieve equally well and those from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Pupils with statements of special educational needs, including those in the Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) make good progress from their often lower starting points and their attainment is close to average. Higher ability pupils do especially well by the end of Key Stage 2, where the proportion of those gaining the higher National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics is rapidly increasing, but not so well in Key Stage 1 where work is not always challenging enough.

Pupils are polite, well-mannered and show consideration for others. Because of the good care shown to them by all adults, pupils learn to care for each other and their environment. Pupils from the HIU are very well integrated in all activities. All the school's pupils learn to sign and are quick to offer support and friendship in the playground. Older ones look after younger ones in assembly and do responsible jobs as helpers in class and assemblies. Pupils have made an effective contribution to school rules and helped plan the new outdoor environment. They feel safe and say they always have someone to talk to if worried. Behaviour is good and pupils report that instances of bullying are very rare, and are quickly and effectively dealt with.

Teaching and learning are good; there is particularly outstanding practice in Year 6, characterised by excellent use of role play, to bring topics to life, and relevant use of ICT. Learning is frequently assessed throughout these excellent lessons and used to move pupils on to higher levels. Despite school leaders' effective efforts to improve teaching and learning over the past two years, there remains a proportion of satisfactory teaching, mainly in Key Stage 1. In these lessons, what children are to learn is often confused with the activities they are to do, and planning does not clearly target the full range of abilities in the class. There are sometimes too many unrelated activities in lessons for younger pupils which confuses them. Assessment is, however, used well to determine the next steps for learning. Pupils are becoming more adept in assessing their own learning and that of their classmates.

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The headteacher and deputy are highly effective in their leadership roles. They have communicated their vision for higher standards and all-round improvement to staff, and there is a shared ambition for success and further improvement. Self-evaluation is thorough, resulting in carefully targeted priorities for development which have led to good improvements in pupils' achievement and progress. Challenging targets are set for the end of Key Stage 2, and these are invariably met or exceeded. The governing body is well led and plays an informed role in school self-evaluation. Because of the good all-round improvement since the previous inspection, the school is well placed to make further improvements.

The school is a cohesive community where everyone is valued and their talents recognised. It is well regarded by, and makes a sound contribution to, its local community. Parents and carers value the school's strong partnership with them. Children support many local and global charities, reinforcing their view of themselves as responsible young citizens. However, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain, and awareness of cultures in the wider world, which pupils themselves and senior leaders have identified.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school, by:
 - making sure that all lessons have clear learning objectives which provide sufficient challenge for the range of ability in all classes
 - ensure that lesson plans focus on what pupils are expected to learn, rather than just the activities they are to do
 - make sure that lessons do not contain too many unrelated activities for younger children.
- Review provision for community cohesion to ensure pupils gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain and the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment to the school is broadly average. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and improves to good, and often excellent, in Key Stage 2, so that attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Progress is sometimes hindered when work is not well connected in Key Stage 1, for example, when the focus was 'writing instructions', a variety of unrelated activities distracted pupils from the main purpose of the lesson. In contrast, Year 6 pupils were fully focused on studying the engineering achievements of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. They made excellent progress in learning more about these achievements by using video clips, podcasts and internet research.

In the HIU, pupils made good progress in literacy and numeracy. Older ones develop their vocabulary well and enjoy using 'wow' words in speech and writing. Younger pupils made good progress, sequencing pictures of Kipper's visit to the dentist, to help them write the story.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and have hosted and attended visits focusing on the role of school councils in learning. They responsibly set up and run playtime activities. Pupils eat healthily and enjoy being active.

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Their attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and those from different backgrounds get on well with one another. Although they learn about other cultures and different religions, this is mostly classroom based and not based on first-hand experiences through visits and visitors.

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	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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and enables pupils to make good progress. There remains some inconsistency, however. Most teachers have high expectations of literacy and promote paired discussions well. Pupils make good progress in lessons where they can investigate and experiment practically, for example, with mirrors in symmetry work. Teachers make use of 'mini-plenaries' to assess pupils as they work. However, these only work when the learning objectives for the whole ability range being taught are clear and refer to what pupils learn, rather than to what they do. Younger children often undertake several unrelated tasks in a lesson, which they assess themselves, using 'I can' statements, referring to the task rather than the learning they have gained from the task.

Teachers in the HIU are highly skilled practitioners who make good use of stimulating visual images, for example, when making a story 'mountain' to aid written work. Progress is assessed regularly on individual targets as well as whole school ones. Highly skilled

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teaching assistants accompany the HIU pupils in the mainstream classrooms in the afternoons, making sure that communication is not a barrier to their learning.

The curriculum is well planned and motivates pupils to achieve well because it is relevant and interesting. Effective links between subjects enable literacy, numeracy and ICT to be well developed throughout the school. Good provision for personal, social and health education promotes good emotional and social development and underpins positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. Curriculum provision ensures that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the HIU, are fully met alongside their peers. Curriculum enrichment is very strong. Over 80 per cent of pupils take part in a wide variety of activities, including clubs, sporting activities and a wide range of visits, including residential visits to Wales.

The school has well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils which result in their good personal development and well-being. This extends to the high quality breakfast and after-school club. Parents, carers and their children agree they feel safe in school. The excellent support for pupils and their families who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances includes that of a qualified counsellor. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to help its children with statements of special educational needs to overcome barriers to their learning. Very good advice is given to pupils and families when they enter or leave school.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the school well and effectively communicates her high expectations to all staff. She and her deputy lead by example and are determined to raise standards. The HIU is well led. The leadership roles of other staff members are well developed. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has resulted in good improvement, though there are still some inconsistencies in teaching. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It ensures that all statutory requirements are met. New governors have recently been elected, and are undergoing training to fulfil their role of holding the school to account. The before- and after-school clubs are valued by many parents and carers.

The school's procedures for safeguarding are good. It adopts recommended good practice and all staff are well trained in child protection issues. Health and safety risks are thoroughly assessed. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and is closing any gaps in achievement between different groups. Its ethnicity audit, and subsequent support for pupils learning English as an additional language, has resulted in their improved

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progress. Appropriate funding ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in all activities, including trips and residential visits.

The school promotes community cohesion strongly within the school and its outreach into the local community includes environmental projects and supporting local charities. It also engages with communities further afield, for example, in India and responds to global events such as earthquakes and floods. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to mix with, and learn first hand about, people from a wider range of cultural and religious traditions than they encounter in school.

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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start the Nursery with skills and knowledge ranging from in line to well below those typical of children of their age. Children in the Resourced Unit are completely integrated into the setting. The extra staffing they bring enables the wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities to be provided for. Consistently good teaching ensures that the majority of children make good progress, regardless of their different starting points, and most thoroughly enjoy learning and their achievements are good.

Only two weeks into term, most children in the Nursery were already enjoying playing in the sand and the home corner, though some needed adult support and reassurance. Reception children were already familiar with class routines and took very little time to settle attentively on the carpet. Their developing social skills enabled some of them to initiate learning activities when playing amicably in small groups together, for example, building walls with large blocks. They were excited by the imminent return from holiday of their toy penguin and many were able to make marks on invitations to the party to be held next day for the penguin and his friends.

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Learning opportunities are well planned to include activities across all the areas of learning. The learning environment is very well equipped, both indoors and outdoors as it has been imaginatively planned and purpose-built. Staff and children were making the most of sunny weather to undertake a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities.

Good leadership ensures planning is thorough and assessment is used effectively to match adult-led activities to the range of children's abilities. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Good relationships with parents and carers extend learning into children's homes.

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 majority of parents and carers expressed positive views about the school. Several praised the school for its values and the quality of education. Typical comments included: 'fantastic school with great teachers and staff'; 'teachers have made a real difference to my child'; 'happy children and an excellent education system'.

A very few individual concerns were expressed, mainly about the imminent closure of before- and after-school care. Others wanted more information about their child's progress; some thought higher ability children did not do well enough.

Inspectors found that:

The governing body has planned to hold a meeting concerning the before- and after-school care in the very near future. The closure appears to be purely on financial grounds.

The school gives parents and carers as much information about progress as most other schools and parents and carers can arrange for extra meetings should they require them.

Higher ability children do extremely well in Key Stage 2, but inspectors found that some younger children are not always sufficiently challenged because learning is not consistently pitched to meet the full range of ability in all classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howes 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	35	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	66	30	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	40	46	53	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	38	45	52	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	48	37	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	40	43	49	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	43	49	56	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)	39	45	43	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	51	32	37	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	37	45	52	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	33	47	54	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	40	46	53	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	52	42	48	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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>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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howes Community Primary School, Coventry, CV3 5EH

Thank you very much for being so helpful to my colleagues and me during our visit. It was good to see you enjoying your work and play. We agree with you that yours is a good school, and here are some of the reasons.

Your headteacher runs the school well. Teaching is good so you enjoy your lessons and work hard. Sometimes teaching does not give all of you hard enough work to do in lessons. Even so, you do well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, you make excellent progress and your attainment in English and mathematics is above average. These achievements, and your good behaviour and attitudes to learning, prepare you well for secondary school. You enjoy coming to school and you contribute a lot to make it such a happy, warm and friendly place.

All the adults take good care of you and in turn, you take care of those younger than yourselves at play and lunchtimes. You look out for your classmates from the Unit and make a big effort to communicate with them by learning to sign. You can always talk to someone if you have problems. You all get on well together and learn about different religions and cultures in school, but don't get visits and visitors to help you understand more. We also think you need to learn more about how people live in more far-off places in the world. All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen we have asked them to do the following things.

Make sure you have work in all lessons which makes you think and challenges you to do well.

Find ways of giving you more contact with people from a wider range of different cultures who live in Britain and help you to learn more about how people live in other parts of the world.

You can help by always doing your best to succeed.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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