

Hartest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124701
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359750
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Burr
Headteacher	Hilary Hall
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
School address	The Row Hartest, Bury St Edmunds IP29 4DL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 12 lessons and observed four teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 50 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well teaching caters for the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes.
- The effectiveness of improvements introduced by the new headteacher.
- The impact of measures to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Hartest is a small school compared to other primaries. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. They are taught in three mixed-age classes: Reception and Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, and Years 3, 4 and 5. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The school has the Activemark award and national Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

The school is set to keep its present Year 5 pupils until they leave Year 6 as part of the reorganisation of Suffolk schools into a two-tier education system. A new hall is being built. There is a pre-school on the site that is privately run and subject to a separate inspection.

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

3

Main findings

Hartest Primary provides a satisfactory level of education. It is an improving school, as the new headteacher has brought a renewed focus on raising attainment and accelerating progress. Her vision is supported enthusiastically by staff, parents and carers, and the governing body. By the end of Year 4, standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although there is some unevenness in the rate of progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive from learning support assistants.

Pupils have an outstanding appreciation of being healthy. They take plenty of exercise, benefiting from a good range of sports clubs and their own open-air swimming pool. They monitor their health and fitness each term. Pupils grow their own vegetables and eat fresh fruit daily. They say they feel safe at school, and this view is supported by all parents and carers who returned questionnaires. Pupils behave well and the older ones look after the younger ones.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan for a wide range of different abilities in mixed-age classes, although this is sometimes not precise enough, so more-able pupils in particular are insufficiently challenged. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to take an active part in lessons. Occasionally the pace slows because too much time is spent introducing the activities. Teachers use resources well to interest pupils, including interactive whiteboards. The effectiveness of questioning varies. At times, this is not sufficiently probing to extend pupils' thinking and cause them to reflect at depth upon their learning. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are known as individuals and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are included well. There are good links with outside agencies to provide additional advice. Good monitoring systems contribute well to pupils' above-average attendance.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving as a result of support from an advanced skills teacher. Children settle happily to tasks, although they do not always have sufficient opportunities to choose activities for themselves. At times, the level of challenge does not match children's capabilities, as expectations of what they can do and achieve are not always high enough. Thorough records are kept of children's progress, but these are not easily accessible to parents and carers. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. There has been a tendency to be over-generous in judgements because the monitoring of teaching and learning is not always systematic or rigorous enough. The headteacher is introducing measures to change this, and staff work together well as a team, united in driving forward improvement. The governing body is focusing its monitoring on the school's priorities for development, but this work is at an early stage. The school has

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made satisfactory progress since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching and learning more consistently good by:
 - matching work closely to the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
 - injecting pace into lessons so that all pupils achieve as well as they can
 - using questioning to stimulate high quality reflection upon learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management, ensuring that:
 - leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the school's provision rigorously and systematically
 - self-evaluation is accurate.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage further by:
 - giving children more opportunities for self-initiated activities
 - raising expectations of what all children can do and achieve
 - refining record-keeping systems to make them more accessible to parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and particularly enjoy practical activities. The younger pupils took delight in making bridges from a range of materials for the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' to walk over. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoyed describing a view from a window that changed over time. Small cohorts mean that there are fluctuations in attainment from year to year (there are only five pupils in the present Year 5), although this is broadly in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. While most pupils make satisfactory progress, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. This is because of the good support they receive that is tailored specifically to their needs.

The school council takes an interest in improving the school environment, considering how to make playtimes more enjoyable. Pupils take responsibility as play leaders, junior road safety officers, school ambassadors and buddies. They join in with village events such as the Remembrance Day service and the Mayday Festival. They think about 'values for life' such as 'responsibility', and this contributes to their good social and moral development. They have a satisfactory understanding of different cultures through their curriculum research, and occasional visits and visitors. Pupils work together in teams, and get on well with children of all ages. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

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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	3
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	1
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	2
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?

Teachers make clear to pupils what they are to learn, and pupils sometimes consider how they will know whether they have been successful. As a result of strategies introduced by the new headteacher, pupils are beginning to discuss their learning more, but questioning does not always probe deeply enough. Some lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with good use of talk partners and resources to interest and engage pupils. However, this is inconsistent. All pupils make satisfactory progress, but sometimes more-able pupils are not challenged enough to meet their full capability, because the work they are given is too easy for them. Marking is often positive, and sometimes shows pupils how they can improve. Pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to the marking in their books. They know what level they are working at, and what their targets are for improvement. This is not always reinforced in the marking.

The curriculum is satisfactory, as teachers are beginning to make more links across subjects. Older pupils wrote stories set in a different culture. Good use is made of the immediate locality, but pupils do not go on enough trips further afield. There is a good range of clubs to enrich the curriculum, such as the science club, when pupils were inspired by experiments using balloons. There is good provision for special educational needs, with careful attention given to drawing up individual education plans. The school cares for its pupils' pastoral needs well. Learning support assistants help pupils to overcome potential barriers to their learning through a skilful mix of assistance and

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challenge to promote independence. Pupils have good relationships with adults and are happy to turn to them with any worries.

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?

The new headteacher has successfully created a culture where change can occur rapidly. Together with the bursar and the governing body, she has managed a major building project efficiently while still focusing on improving provision. Strategies she has introduced have had a positive impact on pupils' good personal development and the school's friendly ethos, with high staff morale and appreciative parents and carers. Both staff and parents and carers described the new headteacher as 'a breath of fresh air.' It is too early to see the full impact of initiatives on pupils' attainment and progress, although monitoring is becoming more rigorous and self-evaluation more accurate. The governing body's effectiveness is satisfactory. Under new leadership, it has focused its energies on those areas of school improvement that are most pressing.

There are good links with parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Their views and suggestions are taken into account, and they are welcomed in to support their children. Open days and special lunches for relatives give parents and carers insight into the work of the school. It promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, ensuring all pupils are fully included. All requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are fully met, with staff training up to date. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school knows its own area well, and reaches out to all groups effectively. The development of links both nationally and globally are at an early stage, but plans to improve this aspect are appropriate.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 join Reception with a wide range of skills and abilities, mainly in line with what is usually expected, although often below in writing. They have opportunities to take part in a satisfactory range of interesting activities, many of which are led by adults. At times, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop independence by selecting their own tasks, or pursue their own interests. Children are happy, and mix well together and with the Year 1 pupils in their class. They have opportunities to work outside, and enjoyed taking part in a survey watching birds. The teaching is satisfactory and meets the needs of most children, although expectations of higher-attaining children are sometimes not high enough so activities do not always ensure they move quickly on in their learning. Careful records are kept of children's progress. These are not kept in a way that is easily accessible for parents and carers or for the children themselves. As a result opportunities are missed to involve parents and carers more closely and to encourage children to understand how well they are doing. By the time they enter Year 1, children have made satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average, although a little below in writing. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Adults work together well as part of a team, and the two teachers who job-share communicate effectively.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of questionnaires were returned by parents and carers.

All agreed that their children enjoyed school, were safe and were helped to have a healthy lifestyle. A few parents and carers were concerned about the progress their children were making and several were not sure how well they were prepared for the next stage of their education. Inspectors found that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but that there is some unevenness in the rate of progress. The recent partial reorganisation of middle schools in the area has caused some uncertainty for parents and carers about when and where to send their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hartest Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	62	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	70	15	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	56	20	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	58	17	34	3	6	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	58	20	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	56	20	40	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	66	17	34	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)	18	36	23	46	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	58	19	38	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	50	24	48	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	58	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	74	11	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	68	16	32	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hartest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Bury St Edmunds IP29 4DL**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You told us that you enjoy your lessons and like taking part in all the different sports clubs. You would like to go on more trips. Here are some of the school's strengths.

You behave well and look after one another.

You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy.

You help out around the school and get involved in village life.

Your attendance is good.

The school cares for you well.

Your headteacher is working hard with the staff to make the school even better.

There are good links with your parents and carers.

There are three areas we have said your school should improve.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work challenges you, that lessons run at a brisk pace and that you discuss your learning in depth.

We have asked the school's leaders and the governing body to check carefully how well the school is doing so that they are clear about how it can get even better.

We have asked the staff in Reception to make sure children have plenty of opportunity to choose activities for themselves, and to make it easier for parents and carers to see how their children are getting on.

You all can help by telling your teachers what you enjoy learning and by doing your best. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector

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