

Hormead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117439
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379420
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Najoud Ensaff

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie King
Headteacher	Andrew Reade
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
School address	Great Hormead Buntingford SG9 0NR
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	15–16 March 2012
Inspection number	37940

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Introduction

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector saw 13 lessons taught by four teachers, including the headteacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher, class teachers and members of the governing body. The inspector observed pupils at work and play, listened to them read and spoke to them about their experiences at school and about their learning. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She observed the school's work, and looked at: lesson planning, pupils' books, self-evaluation documents, the improvement plan, the school website, local authority reports, records relating to safeguarding and the monitoring of teaching, and the tracking of different pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. Questionnaires returned by 45 parents and carers, and others completed by staff and pupils, were also analysed.

Information about the school

Hormead Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school, and has a part-time nursery. Since July 2009, it has had no Year 6 as pupils have moved to local middle schools at the end of Year 5. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are White British and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. Their needs mostly relate to specific learning or behavioural difficulties. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

The headteacher joined the school in April 2009. One of the three class teachers joined in September 2009 and another was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection. Her replacement has been at the school since October 2011. The school caters for children whose parents and carers reside in the local area. It has won Healthy Schools status and the School Travel Plan Gold Award.

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

Key findings

- Hornead Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good features: it is a welcoming, active place where pupils are known as individuals and behave well, and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The school is not yet good because the quality of teaching and data analysis are not yet consistently good enough to help pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress across all key stages, and when they leave at the end of Year 5 their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe, and say that any rare cases of bullying are handled effectively.
- Teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good classroom practice, particularly in Key Stage 1. Marking does not systematically provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve, although marking some is good, particularly in English in Key Stage 1. Assessment data are not always accurate, so staff and pupils do not currently have a fully accurate view of pupils' starting points or their progress, on which to base lesson planning at the right level of challenge.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have been adequately addressed, and the management of performance is satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous to help the quality to improve rapidly. Parents, carers and staff are generally very supportive of the school and the headteacher has done much to engage them and improve facilities. The curriculum is good and meets pupils' interests well.

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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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - work is always well matched to pupils' individual needs
 - teachers' marking across all subjects includes helpful guidance for pupils on how to improve their work
 - the pace of learning is sufficiently brisk to promote good learning.
- Refine the accuracy and use of assessment across the school by:
 - ensuring that children are always assessed upon entry to Nursery
 - routinely moderating work across the school
 - ensuring that pupils understand clearly how they can move forward in their learning.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching by ensuring that progress towards specific areas for improvement is regularly reviewed.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age. Children's skills in solving problems, reasoning and numeracy develop satisfactorily so that by the time they enter Year 1, most are able to count to 10 and understand what adding and taking away mean, with some able to carry out simple calculations. Teachers and learning support assistants help children in Reception to develop their communication, literacy and language skills, so that during the inspection, children were seen recognising and sounding out simple words, with a few able to write these words. Children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, and vibrant indoor and secure outdoor areas help them to develop well in their creative, personal and social skills.

The vast majority of parents and carers believe their children are making good progress. Though it is sometimes good, it is more typically satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers sometimes spent too much time on tasks or pitched work at the wrong level. Pupils did not find the work consistently challenging. As a result they made no better than satisfactory progress. In the minority of lessons where pupils made good progress, they were fully engaged in their learning and understood fully what they were doing. In these lessons, the pace was brisk and work was well matched to pupils' needs. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 5, attainment in reading is generally broadly average. Skills in mathematics are slightly stronger than in English in Key Stage 1, as a result of a particular school focus, but attainment is broadly average throughout the school.

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Pupils are taught in small classes and this is particularly beneficial for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who make better progress than their peers over time. Focused individual and group interventions, coupled with good staff understanding of these pupils' needs, also have a positive impact on their performance. The school works hard to ensure that gaps between the performance of different groups, for example pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or those with special educational needs, and their peers are starting to close. Pupils respond well to tasks, demonstrating application and a willingness to work hard. They rise well to the challenges with which they are presented.

Quality of teaching

Some teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1, excites and enthuses pupils so that good learning takes place. However, other lessons sometimes lack sufficient pace because teachers spend too long explaining a task or do not intervene or reshape tasks in response to pupils' learning soon enough. As a result, there is not always enough challenge to promote good learning and tasks are not sufficiently well tailored to the individual needs of learners. Inaccuracies in assessment data in some year groups in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 make it more difficult for teachers to plan work at the right level or provide all pupils with clear enough information on how well they are doing and where they need to improve.

The most effective teaching was seen in a minority of lessons where teachers used their knowledge of pupils' different abilities and needs to tailor work well for them. In these lessons, teachers explained the purpose of an activity very clearly, reshaped activities and allowed pupils to assess their own learning, so that pupils fully understood how to develop their skills further. In other lessons, teachers used resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), well to engage pupils. These lessons motivated pupils and excited their interest in learning. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were very keen to say words in Spanish when a colourful prop was used as a prompt to speak, while another child in Reception enjoyed sounding out and writing words when she played a game on the interactive whiteboard. Teachers take advantage of good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the securely-planned curriculum through art, use of the outdoor environment and educational visits.

Pupils' books are generally marked regularly, with pupils sometimes being given useful suggestions about how to improve, particularly at Key Stage 1. The best marking consists of accurate and regular feedback, with teachers providing pupils with the opportunity to respond to their comments. This good practice is not yet sufficiently widespread across all subjects or across the school. Consequently, not all pupils, especially in some year groups in Key Stage 2, are sure about what they need to do to improve.

Most pupils think they are well taught. The vast majority of parents and carers agree, and believe that their children's individual needs are met. The inspector found that

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although there is some good teaching, it is too often satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically good. Most parents, carers and staff and the large majority of pupils are positive about behaviour, and several parents and carers praised the dedication of staff and the welcoming community atmosphere of the school. Pupils are consistently well behaved in the majority of lessons and around the school, and this contributes well to their learning. They work and interact well together, and are punctual, courteous, welcoming and considerate of each other and other adults.

The school's systems for managing and monitoring behaviour are good. Staff care about pupils and respond to concerns well. A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns regarding behaviour. Pupils reported that they get on well together at school and that any form of bullying is very rare. They place great confidence, based on past experience, in staff's ability to deal effectively with any incidents. Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, such as name-calling and racism, and have a well-developed understanding of how to keep safe. This is reflected in the school's Travel Plan Gold Award.

The majority of pupils report that they feel safe, and almost all their parents and carers agree. One wrote of the 'amazing' support provided for her child, and another of the school's 'family feel'.

Leadership and management

Since joining the school, the headteacher has worked hard to improve the facilities, to engage positively with parents and carers, and to develop links with the local and wider community. Pupil numbers have increased as a result of his efforts, as has the number of extra-curricular activities. Focused work in some areas of relative weakness in teaching has secured positive improvements. For example, support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is now much more effective. Better teaching of mathematics has led to better attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 1. These developments, alongside sustained good behaviour and the continuing involvement of the governing body, show that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders and managers have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped. Despite the improvements made, feedback to teachers does not always focus on the specific areas identified for improvement. These are not followed up in subsequent checks on teaching, and this reduces the impact of monitoring procedures and the overall effectiveness of professional development.

Engagement with parents and carers is generally very positive, with several parents commenting positively on the 'approachability of staff'. The governing body provides appropriate challenge to school leaders. It ensures that statutory requirements for

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safeguarding are met. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily, rather than well, because work is not well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils confirm that discrimination of any form is not tolerated.

The curriculum meets pupils' academic needs appropriately. It covers all required elements and is effective in promoting good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Part of a sports consortium of schools, Hornead is an active school where pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, for example tag rugby, sewing and cookery, and pupils are encouraged to participate in a lively end-of-year production and develop active lifestyles, as reflected in the Healthy Schools status. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in residential weeks, educational visits to places such as the Science Museum in London, Sikh temples, mosques and historical and other places of interest. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of other religions and cultures, and they are given good opportunities for reflection.

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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hornead Church of England Primary School, Great Hornead, Buntingford, SG90NR

I enjoyed coming to visit your school, watching you in lessons and listening to your views, including those that some of you gave in questionnaires. Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and helpful during my visit. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are the best things about your school.

- It is a friendly, active school with close links to the community.
- You work in small classes and are known as individuals.
- You behave well and this helps you to learn.
- You enjoy good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular clubs and educational visits, which help you to develop good social, spiritual and cultural skills.
- You are successfully encouraged to lead active lifestyles.

These are the things I have asked your school to do to improve.

- Make sure that the work set in lessons is always suitable for your needs, and neither too hard nor too easy.
- Make sure that you are always given suggestions on how to improve the work in your books.
- Ensure that lessons move quickly so that you learn as well as possible.
- Get teachers to check how they assess your work, so they are clear about the levels you are working at. They can then help you to make faster progress.
- Improve the way senior leaders check that teaching is getting better.

You can all help by talking to your teacher when you do not understand how to improve your work, and by continuing to work hard. I hope that these points will help you and your school to move forward.

Yours sincerely

Najoud Ensaff
Lead inspector

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