

Houghton-on-the-Hill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120136
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358699
Inspection dates	6–7 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Smith
Headteacher	Jan Knox
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
School address	Main Street Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicester LE7 9GD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and carers and pupils, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including minutes of governing body meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 61 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- How effectively the school is promoting early writing skills in Reception and helping boys to improve their writing in Key Stage 1.
- The progress pupils make by the time they leave at the end of Year 5.
- How successfully the school has eliminated inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
- What progress the school has made in implementing a creative curriculum.
- The effectiveness of new leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvements to outcomes and provision.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. Numbers have fallen since the previous inspection because there is no longer a nursery class. About half of all pupils travel by choice from outside the normal catchment area. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2009. Three of the six single-age classes are taught on a job-share basis.

A breakfast club each day for up to 15 pupils is managed by parents and carers for the benefit of other working parents and carers.

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

This is a good school. It has an excellent partnership with parents and carers. The partnership has been significantly enhanced by measures introduced by the headteacher to ensure parents and carers have the knowledge required and opportunity to contribute to their children's learning. Homework is well planned each week and pupils enjoy the challenging tasks they are set. A strong ethos and close links with the church ensure a warm, caring, family atmosphere. Highly effective links with other local schools ensure good practice is shared.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently above average attendance. They feel safe because of the excellent relationships they have with staff and their friendships with other pupils. Their behaviour is good in lessons and most show how keen they are to learn. Their attention only wavers when teaching does not provide them with suitably challenging tasks.

Overall, the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good and this ensures pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 5. Common strengths in lessons throughout the school include good use of assessment and tasks that are matched closely to the different abilities of pupils. Small pockets of inconsistency occur, particularly in Key Stage 1, but these do not detract from the good progress pupils make as they move through the school. Most achieve standards that are significantly above expected levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave. Attainment in reading is high throughout, reflecting parental support and the strong emphasis on promoting reading in lessons. Writing skills, although improving by Year 2, are still not as good as those in reading because pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to write at length. The measures introduced to improve boys' writing are effectively closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls.

Children enter Reception with skills that are in line with those expected for their age and make satisfactory progress. They enter Year 1 with average attainment. School assessment data inaccurately show children making good progress and leaving Reception with skills that are well above average. As a result, staff planning does not take full account of children's prior learning and on occasions, activities in Reception and Key Stage 1 are not sufficiently challenging to promote effective learning for all ability groups. Insufficient emphasis is given to developing early writing skills in Reception, and progress in this aspect is not as marked as in other areas. The school has identified the outdoor area and equipment as an area for improvement.

The headteacher, governing body and subject coordinators work effectively as a team. All have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Staff demonstrate a good capacity to continue improving all aspects of the school through their involvement in monitoring how effectively identified priorities are being resolved. The governing body has a wealth of

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expertise to offer and is increasingly becoming involved in helping to evaluate outcomes and provision. Governors' good knowledge and involvement with staff help to ensure that the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate and the resulting information is used to plan activities in the classroom and outdoors that challenge all children
 - providing more opportunities to develop children's early writing skills.
- Improve attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good
 - pupils have regular, planned opportunities for extended writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

By Year 2, pupils' overall attainment has been significantly above average for the past five years. Most pupils make good progress and attainment is currently above average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. In mathematics, this represents an improvement on the school's performance in the 2010 national assessments. However, pupils' progress is not uniformly good in this key stage. This inconsistency is linked to the occasionally less effective teaching and learning. On occasions, where the pace of learning is slow or tasks are too easy, some pupils lose concentration and their progress is satisfactory rather than good. Attainment in writing is a focus for improvement. However, standards are still not as high as they are in reading and mathematics because pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to write at length in order to consolidate and improve their skills. Pupils make consistently good progress in Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave Year 5, their attainment is significantly above average in English and mathematics. The relatively few with special educational needs and/or disabilities also do well because their progress is carefully assessed and the work planned for them builds successfully on their prior learning.

Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance, which has been maintained over the past three years. They act responsibly and behave well in and around the school. Pupils respond positively to their teachers' high expectations and respect each other, working well collaboratively when given group tasks. Older children act as buddies to younger children and often play with them at playtimes, building on the school's 'extended-family' ethos. Most have a good awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. The school has gained Healthy Schools status as a result. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good social skills, positive attitudes and good basic skills prepare them well for the future, in their next school and beyond.

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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	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?

Typically, pupils are set tasks in lessons which interest and challenge them, and good use is made of computers to support and enhance learning. In one outstanding lesson, enthusiastic teaching helped pupils to enjoy humorous poems and inspired them to try and write nonsense verse by themselves. In the few lessons where teaching and learning are less effective, introductions are too long and insufficient account is taken of assessment information to plan appropriate tasks for pupils of different ability levels. Marking is thorough and effectively provides pupils with guidance on how to further improve their work.

The curriculum effectively promotes reading and numeracy skills, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for future learning. A strong focus on improving writing is helping to raise standards, especially for boys. A more creative curriculum is being developed with a range of interesting topics which draw on pupils' learning from different subjects. The promotion of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship through the curriculum is a strength. Special lessons give pupils the opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues such as their responsibilities in school, behaviour and sharing. The curriculum is enhanced by two residential visits each year and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as chess and construction. There is also a good emphasis on music and sporting activities. Staff have considerable expertise in teaching French and this expertise is shared with other local

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schools. Consequently, many pupils show a confidence beyond their years when speaking French in lessons.

Pupils are happy in school because they feel staff are always there for them, should they need help or support. They particularly enjoy using the extensive grounds for lessons and at break time. The Buddy bench ensures no-one is short of a friend and older pupils are always willing to look after and play with younger pupils. Good attendance is maintained by the school's effective procedures to check up on any absence. In the breakfast club, pupils are well cared for and have a satisfactory range of activities to occupy them whilst they wait for school to begin.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has correctly identified a list of priorities for improvement and is tackling them systematically. Roles and responsibilities for key staff have been established and most are helping to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and outcomes in their subject areas. Senior staff are beginning to help the headteacher to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. The governing body has established a good working relationship with staff. Governors are well informed and know the school's strengths and where improvements can be made through their regular monitoring visits. Some of these visits, however, are not closely linked to evaluating school priorities, missing opportunities to give staff valuable feedback on the rate of improvement.

Careful tracking of pupils' progress each term ensures that any pupils who are falling behind are identified and supported. Tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are given a consistently high priority by staff. Equality of opportunity is judged as good rather than higher because of the uneven progress of pupils in some classes. The school has an excellent relationship with parents and carers, who appreciate all that the school is doing for their children. Partnerships with the local church, partner schools and other specialists are a strength and make a major contribution to pupils' learning and their enjoyment of school.

The school has satisfactory arrangements for making sure that the pupils are as safe as possible. The governing body safeguarding committee has identified where further development is necessary and is seeking funding to secure improvements. Thorough risk assessments are conducted carefully by staff before any visit or activity. The school has detailed action plans to develop all aspects of community cohesion. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures. This is enhanced by well-established links

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with schools which have more minority ethnic pupils, and by raising money to support charities in Malawi.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into school because of good induction arrangements and the excellent relationships with parents and carers. Some make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and in their personal development but overall, their progress is satisfactory. A strong emphasis on children's well-being ensures that they feel safe and enjoy happy relationships with other children, including pupils further up the school who regularly look after them during playtime and the lunch hour. Children's behaviour is invariably good and they maintain their concentration well when learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some introductions to lessons are lengthy and involve all the class. As a result, some children find keeping up easy whilst others struggle. There are appropriate opportunities for children to explore and learn independently but learning outdoors is not as effectively planned as that indoors. Children's learning and progress are assessed termly but inspectors found that the information is not always accurate. This makes it difficult for staff to plan activities and tasks which are closely matched to children's different ability levels. As a result, some activities such as counting cows jumping over the moon do not build effectively on previous learning or provide sufficient challenge to ensure most make better than satisfactory progress. Children gain a good knowledge of letters and their sounds because of the daily phonic sessions. However, they are not provided with sufficient opportunities to use this knowledge, slowing the development of early writing skills.

Leadership and management are shared by the two part-time teachers and are satisfactory. Training has focused on improving provision but this has not yet begun to

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raise attainment. A few parents and carers have concerns about knowing how well their children are doing. This is because records of children's learning experiences and progress are not kept in a form which can be easily shared with them.

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

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires clearly hold the school in high regard. Over nine out of ten agreed with all but one of the 13 questions. In their comments, parents and carers particularly appreciated the 'lovely atmosphere', the warm welcome from staff and the excellent outdoor environment for their children to enjoy. 'Never had a problem in 10 years' was a typical comment. Inspection evidence endorses their positive views. A very small minority had concerns about how much progress their children make. This was investigated by inspectors, who found that progress was good in Years 2 to 5 and satisfactory elsewhere. The job-share arrangements in three classes was a concern for a very small minority of parents. Inspectors found that pupils' progress in two of these classes was satisfactory rather than good because teachers' expectations were not high enough and they were not planning sufficiently challenging work for pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Houghton-on-the-Hill Church of England 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	64	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	61	22	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	28	41	67	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	34	31	51	7	11	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	34	35	57	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	51	28	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	44	33	54	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)	29	48	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	34	35	57	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	31	38	62	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	41	32	52	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	48	29	48	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	46	30	49	0	0	1	2

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.



8 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Houghton-on-the-Hill Church of England Primary School,
Leicester, LE7 9GD**

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for making us all feel so welcome. At present your school is good but some things, such as your ability to speak French and the excellent support your parents and carers give you and the school, really impressed us. Seeing you at work in lessons, and observing you at lunchtime and playtimes showed us how well you can all behave and how well you look after one another. This helps everyone to feel safe and happy at school. Your good attendance year after year is a credit to you all.

One of the things stopping your school from being even better is the uneven progress you make in some lessons. We have asked all your teachers to plan more challenging work for you; work that will make you have to think hard. We hope all of you will rise to the extra challenge and assessments will show good progress in future. We would also like to see standards in writing rise by the time you reach Year 2 so that they are as good as those for reading and mathematics.

The youngest children in Reception always try their best and just about everyone makes satisfactory progress before they move into Year 1. Your teachers usually plan interesting work, but some of you find it too easy. We are sure that you can manage to do much harder work. We would like to see you have more things to do outdoors and more time to spend improving your writing skills.

All of you are well cared for and supported by your teachers, who work hard to make sure you enjoy school. You are so lucky to have such wonderful school grounds for learning and play. Not many schools can boast of a stream, two greenhouses and a proper tennis court. We hope that you continue to enjoy school, and that you keep working hard to reach even higher standards.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock
Lead inspector

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