

Hadrian Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109505
Local Authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	356563
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Roberts
Headteacher	Sharon Ingham
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2008
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent most of their time observing teaching. Twenty-one lesson observations were carried out, for periods between 20 and 60 minutes, in 10 classes. Several lesson observations were followed by a discussion with pupils about their learning. Further meetings were held with leaders, members of the governing body, the local authority, pupils and teachers. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their work in books across the school. They scrutinised documents including the school development plan, policies, behaviour records, pupil tracking data and the school's monitoring of teaching. Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and 90 parents and carers as expressed through returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties is higher than typical. The proportion of pupils who move in or out of the school at times other than the normal transition points is lower than average. The school has numerous awards and accreditations, including gold 'Sing Up' and National Healthy Schools status.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- The large majority of teaching is good with some that is outstanding, leading to pupils making good progress throughout the school. Gaps in attainment between boys and girls are closing.
- Good leadership is based on a clear understanding of the schools strengths and areas for development. Leaders at all levels are relentless in their drive for improvement. Systems are well thought out and regularly checked so pupils stay safe. Different groups of pupils are monitored closely and inequalities are tackled decisively. Leaders are very focused on ensuring all pupils do as well as possible through carefully evaluated improvements in the curriculum, resources and approaches to teaching.
- The curriculum is well designed to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences. Many practical experiences are proving popular with boys. Music and sport have a high profile in the school. Innovative enterprise activities are well received by pupils and allow them to learn through real-life challenges.
- The school has comprehensive strategies for promoting positive behaviour, taking into account the significant proportion of pupils whose special educational needs and/or disabilities mean that their behaviour can be challenging. These strategies are effective. However, the school has not effectively communicated this to all parents and carers. A small number of parents and carers express a concern that behaviour is not managed effectively and that the behaviour management strategies are applied unfairly to different pupils.
- Behaviour is very positive around the school and in most lessons. Pupils are

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polite and eager to please. Pupils learn about safety and how to stay safe. In lessons, pupils typically work hard and enthusiastically take part in a range of tasks. In a small number of satisfactory lessons seen, low level disruption slowed teaching down because teaching was less engaging. However, the strategies used by teachers to manage this behaviour are effective so learning is able to continue.

- Reading is taught well with most pupils using their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to decode words by the end of Year 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average for pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 4. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better by:
 - improving subject knowledge in mathematics so that all teachers are able to ask highly relevant questions that stretch pupils' thinking
 - ensuring all teaching assistants are well briefed for each lesson so they know exactly how to accelerate learning for particular groups
 - providing opportunities for all teachers to learn from the strong existing practice seen in setting a rigorous pace and providing work at the precise level for all pupils
 - ensuring that the good quality marking seen is always used well by pupils to improve their work.
- Take steps to increase the number of parents and carers who have confidence in the school's effective behaviour management strategies by:
 - considering parents' and carers' views carefully when evaluating and developing behaviour policy further
 - taking steps to ensure that parents and carers appreciate the fairness of the system, while also maintaining the pupils' confidentiality
 - rigorously monitoring the application of behaviour management rewards and sanctions to ensure that they are consistently and fairly applied across the school.

Main report

Good quality teaching enables pupils to achieve well and reach standards of attainment that are above average. Reading is taught well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively learn the sounds that letters make and begin to blend these together to make simple words with confidence. Enjoyable activities encourage children to practise their early reading and writing, which they do willingly. By the time pupils reach the age of six, most are able to blend sounds

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together effectively to read simple books and stories. Effective intervention, either for individuals or for small groups, successfully accelerates learning for those who are in danger of falling behind.

The curriculum is a strong feature in this school. It has been well designed to provide a good balance between exciting experiences, carefully matched opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills and opportunities for pupils to reflect and develop personally and emotionally. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in sport and music activities during the school day and as part of extra-curricular clubs. Opportunities are embedded throughout the curriculum for pupils to develop and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different ways. Enterprise activities are an exciting part of the curriculum. A popular activity involves groups of pupils making a profit with a five pound budget. Literacy, numeracy and personal skills are well developed through such real-life experiences. Additionally, pupils develop their understanding of moral and social issues through the decisions they have to make. The recent 'faith month' gave pupils the opportunity to learn about different faiths. Pupils talked with maturity and insight about diversity, faith, traditions and cultures.

Much work has been done to reduce the attainment gap found between boys and girls. Carefully chosen resources have been purchased and their impact in inspiring boys and girls equally has been evaluated well. Exciting themes have further motivated all pupils, including boys, because they capture their imagination and learning becomes fun. One parent told inspectors: 'The creativity shown in delivering the dinosaur topic has been great. The children, especially the boys, really enjoyed finding bones in the garden and they believe that they are real bones, making the subject come alive.' This type of activity is typical and used to good effect when promoting the development of basic skills.

Most lessons are well pitched to the needs and interests of individuals. This, combined with good pace, ensures pupils stay well motivated. Questions are used effectively because they challenge pupils at the right level. It is clear that teachers know pupils very well and a strong sense of trust exists. In the best lessons seen, teachers made very good use of their marking to show pupils how to improve their work. In lessons that are good or better, pupils enjoy their learning a great deal. Teachers are skilled at taking pupils' interests and using these to motivate and inspire. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good balance between high quality teacher-led activities and opportunities to learn through play. Resources, both indoors and outside, provide a good range of activities that motivate children well.

There are several reasons why a small amount of teaching is satisfactory rather than good. First, some lessons lack pace and, as a result, some pupils get restless, particularly boys. Well-thought-out behaviour management strategies are used well, when behaviour slips, but these slow the pace again, particularly where these slippages take place when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Second, work is not as well matched to individuals and groups, so their learning is not as rapid. Third, in a small number of mathematics lessons, teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge is not of the high standard it needs to be to ask pupils sharply focused

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questions.

Teachers spend a lot of time marking pupils' work and give good quality feedback. In many lessons pupils respond well to this and, as a result, improve their work. However, in a small number of lessons, pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to read and respond to this feedback so the opportunity to improve their work is missed.

Teaching assistants are deployed very well. In most lessons, additional adults make a strong contribution to the learning for groups and individuals because they are well briefed and understand how to specifically support the pupils they are working with. In a small number of classes, where teachers are less effective at briefing adults, teaching assistants use their initiative when supporting pupils to ensure they make satisfactory progress.

The school has well-developed systems and procedures for promoting positive behaviour. These robust methods take full account of the range of special educational needs and/or disabilities pupils have that impact on behaviour. Adaptation to rewards and sanctions are appropriately made to take account of individuals' needs and circumstances. Behaviour overall is good. Incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties respond well to the strategies in lessons, particularly when these are combined with good quality teaching, aimed at their precise learning needs. Leaders have effectively evaluated the impact of their strategies and have been proactive in developing them further so that they continue to strengthen. For example, the appointment of a behaviour support worker has improved the behaviour at lunch time. While a small minority of parents and carers feel that behaviour management is not always effective, almost all say that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils say that they feel safe. There are many opportunities to learn about keeping safe in a variety of situations including when using the internet. Safety around water is taken very seriously and almost all pupils can swim 25 meters by the time they leave Year 4.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, which they do with maturity and a sense of purpose. Prefects have roles that contribute to the smooth running of the school. Playground buddies understand their role in ensuring their peers all have friends to play with and activities to do. These roles and responsibilities are taken very seriously. Rewards are used well to recognise pupils' individual contributions.

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. They passionately share their vision so that staff and members of the governing body are enthused by this. Leaders at all levels are relentless in their drive for continuing school improvement. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate although, at times, a little optimistic because it focuses on the vision leaders have and not always on the position at which they know they are. Systems in school are well developed, reviewed systematically and consistently applied. Safeguarding systems are very

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secure with all in the school having a clear understanding of risk assessments, safeguarding systems and their personal responsibilities. Leaders systematically and effectively monitor teaching and learning. Their accurate use of pupils' performance information, along with their observations around school, are central to informing the improvements seen and ensuring inequalities are tackled decisively. As a result of these improvements, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve. Leaders recognise that, while they are quick to improve strategies and procedures, they are sometimes less successful at communicating these improvements to all parents and carers. At times, this leads to a perception by a small number of parents and carers that strategies are not as effective as they are.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hadrian Lower 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received completed 90 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 271 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	59	66	28	31	2	2	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	57	63	32	36	1	1	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	45	50	38	42	6	7	1	1
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	42	47	41	46	4	4	1	1
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	48	53	38	42	2	2	1	1
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	44	49	41	46	4	4	1	1
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	32	36	47	52	7	8	4	4
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	24	27	46	52	11	12	4	4
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	31	34	41	46	7	8	1	1
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	45	50	37	41	4	4	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	38	42	37	41	11	12	1	1
Q12 The school is well led and managed	39	43	40	44	7	8	3	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hadrian Lower School, Dunstable, LU5 4SR

You may remember that I came with two other inspectors to inspect your school recently. This letter is to let you know the judgements we made. We found that you go to a good school. We were impressed with how polite and well behaved you were around school. We found that your teachers are good at helping you develop good behaviour, even when some of you get angry or fidgety in class.

We enjoyed talking to you about your exciting topics. I particularly enjoyed hearing how you learned about religions during your recent world faiths month. We enjoyed looking at the displays around the hall that showed off the work you did during this project.

We have asked your teachers to work at a couple of things to make your school even better.

We have asked your teachers to learn from each other so all the lessons in your school help you learn at a good pace.

We have also asked your headteacher to make sure everyone understands how the rewards and sanctions for behaviour are given out fairly. We found that your teachers do give these out fairly but some of your parents and carers worry that they do not. We would like the school to listen to these concerns and make sure they do things to reassure everyone about these. You could perhaps talk to your school councillors about how you would like to see rewards and sanctions develop in the future.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for your help during our inspection. Your views are very important to us and we all enjoyed hearing about the exciting things you do at your school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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