

Hoole Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134248
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	381646
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hull
Headteacher	Cheryl Walton
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 20 lessons and saw 14 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's assessments, school policies and records of monitoring, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, and samples of pupils' work. Also taken into account were 67 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by staff members and pupils.

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

- Do pupils make the progress they should in mathematics?
- Does teaching challenge all groups of pupils sufficiently in all lessons?
- How effectively are leaders and managers continuing to improve the school's capacity for sustained improvement?

Information about the school

Most pupils are White British in this above average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that in most schools. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has achieved Healthy School status, holds the Eco-Bronze award and is a recognised 'Sing-Up' school. There is pre-school nursery provision on site as well as before and after school care. These are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Effective leadership and management, with a relentless focus on improvement has successfully steered the school through an unsettled period of staffing since the previous inspection. Rigorous monitoring and realistic self-evaluation, supported by the local authority and involving all stakeholders, has underpinned good improvement in key areas of the school's work. Numerous changes in teaching staff have been managed well. As a result overall teaching quality, curriculum provision and pupils' progress have moved from satisfactory to good and attainment is rising. Leaders and managers have not drawn back from the issues previously facing the school and have amply demonstrated good capacity for sustained improvement.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start in their learning and development. They make good progress from their starting points which although broadly typical for their age are below expectations for some in areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical thinking and personal skills. Progress is good and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is average but rising significantly especially in English, which is above average. Although attainment in mathematics is rising it does not yet match that in English, and is average. Despite pupils now making good progress in mathematics there has been some unevenness across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but this is rising rapidly as a result of improved support.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There is some outstanding teaching but also, occasionally, the teaching of mathematics indicates some teachers lack confidence in the subject resulting in time not being used effectively to improve mental strategies and allow for sufficient independent work. The curriculum engages pupils well and provides good opportunities for both enrichment and enjoyment of learning. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe in school. This contributes well to their good behaviour and excellent attendance. Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further in mathematics by eliminating the inconsistencies in mathematics teaching with regard to:

- teachers' subject knowledge and confidence
- use of time within lessons
- improving pupils' strategies for mental calculation
- embedding mathematics skills across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress and learn well in lessons because they are well behaved and generally attentive. They enjoy their learning and are keen to do well, particularly when engaged in practical work. Pupils benefit from testing out ideas with partners to clarify their thinking and help them to solve problems. The results of some good collaborative investigation were seen, for example in science work, where pupils worked together to prove that air could be weighed. In a mathematics lesson pupils had to draw on their shared history knowledge to link events from a Tudor child's diary to different times of the day. Pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to achieve them. They are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress.

Pupils overall attainment shows good improvement. English, which was well below average in 2009, is now above average. Similarly, mathematics shows a rising trend, though improvement has not been as rapid as in English. Progress is good and has improved in mathematics because of the grouping of pupils by ability for mathematics lessons in upper junior classes. Similarly, increased rigour in the checking of pupils' individual performances and stepping in promptly to tackle any underachievement has proved to be successful. As a result of rigorous and accurate assessment and settled teaching, pupils in Key Stage 1 build well on earlier good progress. School assessments show that attainment at the end of Year 2 is likely to rise. Progress is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is accelerating strongly because the school has adjusted planning for their learning and provision is much more sharply focused, although as yet it is too soon for the impact of the new systems to show their full effect.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are mindful of one another in and around the school and say that they feel safe because of the way others help them. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to stick to a sensible diet and a regular exercise routine. They are active in the playground and enjoy sports clubs after school. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to school life by taking on a range of additional responsibilities such as playground buddies or helping during assemblies. While the school council gives all pupils a voice there is scope for pupils' greater involvement in school matters. Pupils' outstanding attendance, good personal qualities, and increasing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are good preparation for the next stages of their learning and future economic well-being.

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	3
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	3
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	3
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons pupils learn at a brisk pace because they are engaged well in interesting and practical tasks. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and this is reflected in thorough planning and probing questioning which tests pupils' understanding of what they have learned. In contrast to the good pace and challenge of most lessons, inconsistencies in some teaching of mathematics means that although overall progress is good it is uneven through the school in this subject. Sometimes teachers talk for too long, which stops pupils engaging in practical work and learning independently. Too little time is devoted to teaching mental strategies which would speed up calculation when pupils tackle problems.

Effective use of assessment leads to a close match of tasks to pupils' varying abilities. Teachers make pupils aware of how to improve. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by teaching assistants who have a good understanding of pupils' needs and, following effective training, are skilled in providing the necessary help. A good example of this skilful support was seen in the specially designated room where pupils' personal and literacy skills were nurtured well by a story about *The Rainbow Fish*.

The curriculum is accurately targeted at most pupils' needs and interests and enables them to achieve well. There is a good focus on the use of literacy skills across subjects but opportunities for mathematics investigation are not planned as effectively. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities outside of lesson time as well as first-hand experiences to support learning in topic work. It is further enhanced through productive links with the high school in areas such as art and science. Provision for pupils' personal development and their well-being are significant strengths within the curriculum.

Parents and carers fully agree with their children's view that the school cares for them well. There is particularly good support for pupils considered to be potentially

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

the most vulnerable. The school liaises effectively with outside agencies to ensure their best possible support. The vast majority of parents and carers are happy with their children’s experiences at school. Communications about progress and well-being have improved considerably. Arrangements for pupils joining the school are supportive and transition to the high school is managed sensitively particularly for potentially vulnerable pupils. A close watch is kept on attendance in order to maintain the current high level. Pupils’ good personal qualities and relationships are rooted firmly in the school’s strong values and clear guidance.

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’s determined leadership, strongly supported by an effective senior management team and governing body, has successfully brought about good school improvement. There is a clearly shared ambition for the school and all staff members know how they are accountable for raising standards. Effective monitoring and action plans to tackle identified weaknesses are proving most effective. The school has identified raising attainment in mathematics as a top priority. Leaders have embraced external support, particularly to strengthen teaching and progress, exceptionally well. Although the staffing situation is not yet fully settled, astute new appointments and good developmental support for all staff has ensured that attainment has risen impressively and progress overall is good.

The effective governing body has responded vigorously to the challenges which the school has faced. Governors contribute to monitoring and evaluation and have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safeguarded are good. The governing body monitors systems regularly. Risk assessments are thorough and all staff and pupils are aware of their responsibilities. All forms of discrimination are challenged strongly and the school is a harmonious community. The changes made to accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are a direct result of closer monitoring of progress to ensure that all have the opportunities they need to achieve well. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Links with local community groups are strong and on-going exchanges of information with pupils in a Kenyan school help to broaden pupils’ awareness of cultural issues. Links with a socially and economically contrasting school in the United Kingdom are currently at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership has secured good provision and better outcomes for children in the past two years. Provision for children's welfare is good. Staff have successfully established first-class relationships with parents and carers, and enabled them to share in the process of their children's learning and development of skills. Children are warmly welcomed by staff and they thrive because they feel secure and are well cared for. They make good progress and quickly gain confidence and develop their independence. A rich and challenging curriculum is planned and the children's own ideas, such as learning about dinosaurs, are taken into account. Effective teaching ensures a good balance planned between learning which is adult led and that which they decide upon themselves. Stimulating role-play activities encourage good language development and social skills, both indoors and in the outside area. The outside area, however, is jaded and does not offer the best opportunities for exciting independent exploration and play. The teaching of letters with the sounds that they make is good, as are the opportunities for children to follow-up these sessions either in writing tasks with the teacher or through letter games. Very good team work ensures that the days run smoothly. Observations of children are recorded and evaluated and used effectively to plan next steps. The Early years Foundation Stage Team works closely with teachers in Year 1 and, through effective self-evaluation, has a clear action plan for further development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Of those, views expressed about most aspects of the school were overwhelmingly positive. This is consistent with the views of parents and carers gained through informal discussion with inspectors. Very few parents and carers raised concerns. Those which were raised largely referred to the quality of communication with the school. All of the issues were discussed with school leaders. Parents' and carers' anonymity was always protected.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hoole 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	60	24	36	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	66	20	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	34	36	54	6	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	30	38	57	5	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	26	39	36	54	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	33	36	54	7	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	30	41	61	4	6	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)	24	36	30	45	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	24	45	67	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	33	49	8	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	27	40	60	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	40	34	51	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	43	32	48	3	4	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hoole Church of England Primary School, Chester, CH2 3HB

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and learned a lot from our discussions. It was obvious that you are proud of your school and enjoy being there and we can see why. We also found out some good things for ourselves, for example, you are polite and well mannered and you behave well. You take good care of one another and of yourselves and your attendance is excellent so very well done for that!

Yours is a good school because it has improved so much since it was last inspected. Your teachers work hard to make lessons enjoyable and you are taught well in most lessons. The grown-ups in school take good care of you, keep you safe and help you to achieve well. There are new and exciting ways planned for you to learn. You make good progress in your work overall, but the standards you reach in English are much higher than those you reach in mathematics. That is something to improve. Therefore, we have asked your school leaders and teachers to make sure that all of your mathematics lessons are as good as the very best. We have asked them to concentrate particularly on these things. First, that they always give you enough time for practical work in the lesson. Second, to make sure your mental mathematics is always up to speed. Finally, to let you spend more time investigating and solving problems yourselves, inside and outside of the classroom.

You can help by always knowing what is expected of you in the lesson and checking regularly to see that you are on target to achieve it.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

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