

# Hawthorn Park Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109524
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	377937
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jackie Cousins

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Lower deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsey Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Parkside Drive Houghton Regis Dunstable LU5 5QN
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins

Additional Inspector

David Cousins

Additional Inspector

Margaret Louisy

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 22 lessons or part lessons and observed 14 teachers who were teaching during the inspection. They met with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, including hearing some children read and looked at pupils' work in books, the school development plans, records of pupils' progress, policies and the school's self-evaluation documents. They received and analysed questionnaires from 50 parents and carers, as well as surveys from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and pupils who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, and few speak English as an additional language. A significant proportion of children join the school part way through the taught year or key stages. The school manages a breakfast and after school club. It also manages a 'Jigsaw Unit' which provides outreach support for children at risk of exclusion.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because of some unevenness in the rates of pupils' achievement, especially in writing. Pupils from all backgrounds and abilities are quickly integrated into school life, whenever they arrive, because of good leadership and very productive support from staff.
- The key to the school's success is the way that it promotes pupils' self-sufficiency and organisation skills. Consequently, their behaviour, safety and attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points and attainment in Year 4 is in line with expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection, attainment has risen considerably in mathematics and is in line with expectations because pupils' problem solving skills are given a high priority. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 in writing is not quite so strong. Occasionally, feedback and marking for pupils do not tell them if they have met their personal writing targets.
- Teaching is good and so most pupils progress well in key areas of learning. The leadership of teaching is good and so teachers use an effective range of practical activities to deepen pupils' understanding. Occasionally, pupils are not fully involved in evaluating whether they have met objectives in lessons which would enable them to move to a higher level of skill.
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher shows that she is passionate about supporting the local community and all pupils' education. She has successfully established a dedicated senior leadership team and staff. Performance management is used well to develop the school. Pupils' attainment is monitored thoughtfully by senior leaders and the governing body. A few parents and carers would like more information about how well their child is progressing and attaining.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by Year 2 so that their attainment is at least average by:
  - ensuring pupils are involved effectively in assessing their success in lessons so that they reach the next level of skill
  - making sure feedback and marking regularly refers to how well pupils have met their personal targets
  - ensuring parents and carers are informed in detail about their child's progress and attainment at least twice a year.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children start school with levels of skill which are significantly below those expected for their age. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and so attainment is a little below average by the end of the Reception year, especially in writing. Occasionally, opportunities for children to learn to write in their outside area are rather limited. In a good lesson observed in Nursery, pupils learned to create repeating patterns because of the teacher's high expectations of language and mathematical development.

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their children are making good progress. Pupils achieve well from Year 1 upwards, subsequently, attainment is in line with expectations by Year 4. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 known to be entitled to free school meals is the same as similar pupils' nationally and the gap between them and others is reducing. Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils who join the school part way through a taught year or key stage achieve equally as well as others at the school.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress. This is because individual and small-group programmes allow pupils to improve their basic skills successfully. The school works well with other agencies and schools to support pupils with additional needs and those at risk of exclusion.

Pupils, including those who are more able, achieve well in reading from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 4. In 2011 pupils' attainment in reading in Year 2 was average. This is because they learn to combine letter sounds successfully and assessment is used well to group pupils. In the present Year 4, attainment in reading is in line with expectations. Currently, over three-quarters of Year 4 pupils are working at expected or better levels of skill in reading.

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Pupils progress well in learning to communicate. In a good lesson observed, Year 4 pupils very effectively explained what they had done to solve a problem. The lesson was successful because questioning was used astutely. The pupils' oral skills develop productively because teaching ensures that they understand and use vocabulary well. Work on display demonstrates that pupils in Year 4 use their writing and information and communication technology skills successfully when, for example, they create informative posters about people's lives in the Second World War. Pupils make slightly slower progress in learning to write by Year 2.

Boys and girls achieve well in mathematics. In a good lesson seen in Year 4, pupils learned to use and apply their skills when they were challenged to solve a problem using number facts effectively. These pupils developed their times-table knowledge well when, for example, they answered questions quickly using their four and eight times tables because competitive team games were used so productively.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers use the outside learning areas creatively and so pupils enjoy learning about many varied topics in practical ways. For example, a teacher captured Year 3 pupils' interest in a lesson because he used rocks and soil samples in the outside area to bring learning to life. This meant that the pupils learnt rigorously to compare the properties of rocks and materials. Teachers show pupils how to use certain skills successfully and this means, for example, pupils in Year 2 learned to use technology tools effectively when they drew and added colour to their picture of a starry night. Occasionally, a few pupils are not fully involved in measuring their achievements because learning objectives are not always specific. The teaching of reading is good and so pupils' comprehension skills are successfully developed. The very large majority of parents and carers who sent in a questionnaire said that their children are well taught.

Assessment is used productively to plan work for different groups. This means that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, progress well because of good levels of teachers' expertise. Virtually all pupils who answered the questionnaire said that teaching at the school is good. Some said they are not clear about how well they are doing. This is because pupils are not rigorously involved in the assessment of their own and other's work. Teachers' marking and feedback are not always sufficiently detailed to assist pupils to improve their work successfully.

Pupils' spiritual development is considerably supported by all staff. This ensures they learn to reflect on their feelings shrewdly. The pupils learn to be independent because of teachers' high expectations. They learn to debate moral dilemmas. Pupils with additional behaviour needs rarely disrupt others learning because of good levels of staff guidance. Pupils' multi-cultural awareness is effectively established. For example, they learn about other countries and cultures when they study projects linked to China and Egypt.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are welcoming and polite to one another and visitors. The younger and older pupils said that everyone gets on well together and this enhances their social skills. Pupils feel safe because staff manage occasional episodes of challenging behaviour astutely. Bullying incidents are rare. In recent years, very few pupils have been excluded and the school is working carefully to reduce these to even lower levels. Pupils understand clearly the different types of prejudice-based bullying. Virtually all pupils, parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that children are safe in school and the very large majority agreed that behaviour is good.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good because the staff are keen to challenge the pupils through interesting topics. For example, in one lesson in Reception, children were very keen to share their work because of the enthusiasm of the teacher for learning. Pupils' views are shared successfully through the school council and so they were involved in designing the new classroom. Their punctuality is sound and this is monitored carefully by staff. The vast majority of pupils attend well and the school is working well with the few families whose children are persistently absent. Consequently, pupils' attendance has improved recently.

## **Leadership and management**

All staff who responded to the questionnaire said they were proud to be a member of staff. The work of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior teachers and staff is strongly focused on the school's priorities for improvement. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been developed significantly. This means that pupils' needs are met creatively because exciting projects are well planned and these ensure pupils' skills are promoted in several areas of learning concurrently. For example, pupils explained they had enjoyed a project about the oceans and seas because they found it fascinating to learn about the fish in different parts of the world. Key skills of communication, literacy, numeracy, technology and science are promoted effectively and so pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. The quality of teaching has been improved through good use of professional development and performance management. Staff and leaders at all levels make resourceful use of self-evaluation. Consequently, the school has a strong capacity to continue to improve.

The governing body has enhanced its role effectively and it challenges school leaders efficiently through sensitive questions. The encouragement of equal opportunities is managed well and discrimination is not tolerated. The pupils' attainment is monitored carefully by all levels of leadership and staff. All pupils, whatever their backgrounds or circumstances, are included productively in school activities. The school's leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, they enhance effectively pupils' personal, cultural and emotional development through displays full of pupils' work, assembly themes and sporting activities.

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The governing body and senior leaders ensure that pupils are safeguarded well. For example, all staff have up-to-date child protection training, all employment checks are carried out and recorded correctly for staff, and policies are regularly updated. The school supports children's and family's safety because they deploy two family-support workers effectively. Pupils are kept safe and well cared for in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The school's leaders engage productively with parents and carers. Nearly all those who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school responds well to their concerns. One parent commented, 'My child would never have received the help he has without all the staff that have been involved in helping him. I cannot praise them enough. They have been wonderful to me and my child.' A few parents and carers said they would like more information about how well their child is progressing. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said they would recommend this school.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**

30 May 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Hawthorn Park Lower School, Dunstable, LU5 5QN**

Thank you for helping us to find out about your school. It was a huge pleasure to speak to some of you and to hear your ideas and comments. Your school provides you with a good education. You told us that you are happy to come to school, where you all get on well together, and we agree. These are some of the best things about your school.

- You make good progress in your work.
- You behave well in school because staff guide you thoughtfully.
- You feel safe in school because staff manage you firmly and calmly.
- You told me how much you enjoy the projects you study, such as one on the oceans and seas of the world, which is teaching you many skills at the same time.
- You are taught well and staff work hard to make lessons interesting.
- Nearly all of you told us in your answers on the questionnaire that teachers are interested in your ideas.
- You told us how proud you are of your achievements in sport.
- The school staff have established a strong partnership with your parents and carers.

Your headteacher and senior teachers have good ideas about how to improve the school and so we have asked them to make things even better by:

- raising your achievement to even higher levels in writing in Year 2 by using marking and feedback more effectively
- ensuring your teachers involve you in discussing how successful you have been in each lesson so that you work at even higher levels of skill
- making sure your parents and carers receive more details about how well you are doing.

Continue to listen carefully to your teachers' comments, come to school every day and enjoy all the super things you are learning at Hawthorn Park Lower School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins  
Lead Inspector

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