

Hazlemere Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110462
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378104
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Williams

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Lewis
Headteacher	Henrik Rademacher (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2008
School address	Amersham Road High Wycombe HP15 7PZ
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Williams

Additional inspector

Akwai Gill

Additional inspector

David Hogg

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed nine teachers in 23 lessons or part lessons including sessions of phonics (where pupils learn letter patterns and the sounds they represent). Three lessons were observed with the acting headteacher. Inspectors attended two assemblies and observed pupils at break and lunchtime. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the acting headteacher, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, and scrutinised a range of school documents including the school self-evaluation, the school strategic plan including key performance indicators, as well as safeguarding, behaviour and attendance documents. Inspectors scrutinised the returns from 69 questionnaires from parents and carers, along with those returned from pupils.

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to the average primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than that seen nationally. The number of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum standards expected by the government. A breakfast club managed by the school provides out-of-hours childcare. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since the start of the summer term following difficulties in recruiting a permanent headteacher.

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

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in a safe, caring environment. The school’s vision for pupils to, ‘grow in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men’ permeates school life and is a significant factor in enhancing pupils’ good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is not yet an outstanding school because teaching and achievement are good rather than outstanding and performance in English is less strong than in mathematics.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their low starting points to reach above-average attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Pupils enjoy their learning and participate well in different lessons.
- Good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching supports the pupils’ good achievement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are characterised with warm relationships. However, pupils are not always clear about precisely how they can improve their work and questioning does not always give pupils opportunities for full answers or allow pupils to comment on each other’s ideas.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy good relationships with one another and with the staff. They are extremely polite and courteous and have good attitudes to learning, supporting each other well in lessons.
- The acting headteacher and the governing body have a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good; the school has improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Recent improvements in mathematics teaching, with group work and real-life links across the curriculum, have significantly improved pupils’ attainment. The teaching of literacy and literature across the curriculum, while good, is less well developed. The monitoring of teaching is accurate but the impact of teaching strategies on learning is not

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always clear in school observation records.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is outstanding overall by:
 - giving pupils more focused guidance on how to improve their work to move to the next level
 - developing teachers' questioning techniques to incorporate open and probing questions and giving pupils opportunities to respond to each other's answers
 - focusing lesson observations on the impact of teaching strategies on learning.

- Accelerate progress in English by:
 - giving pupils opportunities to develop their literacy skills further across the curriculum
 - developing pupils' appreciation of a range of literature by widening pupils' experience of reading different texts.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school, whether in the Nursery or Reception classes, with skill levels which are below those expected for their age. Good foundations are laid, particularly with the development of a systematic phonics programme. This is delivered in small groups, set by ability and enables children to develop early reading skills well. For example, in a Reception session children were involved in a range of activities including word bingo and actions to support sounds. Children make good progress; outcomes by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage show children's skills in most areas are broadly in line with age-related expectations.

Progress throughout the school is good. Attainment has risen and pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is above average. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has also risen to be above average, including in reading, in 2011. Current school tracking shows this strong performance across the school has been maintained this year. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they thoroughly enjoy learning. Inspection findings support most parents' and carers' views that their children make good progress. This was exemplified well in lessons observed during the inspection. The learning and progress seen were usually good.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. Their learning is good in lessons, and they are well supported by teaching assistants and other adults both in the classroom and in areas outside the classroom. In a Year 5 'philosophy for children' lesson the additional adult used an effective strategy of providing three bricks for each child as the group built a wall to ensure

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each pupil made contributions to the discussion. These pupils were then able to fully take part in the subsequent whole-class discussion. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment in English is narrowing.

Quality of teaching

Teachers' high expectations for pupils' progress and behaviour in lessons support their good achievement. The strengths of teaching are teachers' good subject knowledge, warm, positive relationships and the range of individual and group tasks in lessons. Routines for learning are very well established; pupils' social development is particularly well catered for in most lessons because teachers make good use of 'talking partners' and provide many opportunities for pupils to work in groups. This was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson where pupils engaged enthusiastically in an investigative activity in groups. Their learning was described as a journey and they were encouraged to problem solve, and to understand that they might have to make detours along the way to achieve success.

The very large majority of parents and carers were positive about teaching. Inspection evidence corroborates this view. Despite there being a small minority of satisfactory teaching seen on the inspection, all teachers were observed teaching at a good level in at least one lesson. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistently successful in motivating pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs access the curriculum, enabling them to be fully involved in lessons and make good progress. The teaching of reading has improved and is now structured and systematic. Pupils are grouped according to their abilities so sessions are focused specifically on their needs and this works well.

Marking is regular and the best provides feedback to help pupils to move their work to the next level. However, developmental feedback is not regular and consistent enough throughout the school to ensure all pupils know exactly what their next steps in learning are. In some lessons teachers use questioning well to extend pupils' knowledge. For example in a Year 6 lesson pupils were researching the Olympics and the teacher questioned pupils skilfully about what they had found out at various points in the lesson. However, teachers do not always use a range of open and closed questioning to extend pupils' learning and do not give pupils enough opportunities to think about and comment on each other's views. The curriculum has been adapted in mathematics and incorporates real-life learning situations, opportunities for investigative work and a variety of group work activities which engage pupils in learning. The literacy curriculum is less well developed and the opportunities for pupils to access a wide range of literature across the curriculum are limited.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

As one parent who summed up the views of many said, 'The school has a fantastic community feel to it and the children are a valued part of a big "school family".'

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Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous around school. They have good attitudes to their work and focus on learning in lessons. These are important factors in their enjoyment of school and their good achievement. The school aims, 'To be a God-centred learning community, in which children achieve their potential within a caring mutually supportive learning environment, reflecting our Christian ethos.' This ethos permeates the school and there are warm relationships between adults and pupils in school.

The strengths in pupils' behaviour found at the last inspection have been maintained. Behaviour management routines in classrooms are strong and consistently applied across the school. Pupils are rewarded with house points and these are enthusiastically celebrated by pupils in their certificate assembly. School records show few incidences of poor behaviour over time with pupils' behaviour in class and around the school being consistently good. Pupils themselves have high expectations of behaviour in their school and want everyone to behave well. Pupils who have concerns are confident that all the adults will help them. They say that any rare incidences of bullying of any kind are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of cyber and prejudice-based bullying. A recent prejudice-based incident was dealt with firmly by the school, underlining its position that this would not be tolerated, by inviting the police in to talk to pupils in assembly. The very large majority of parents and carers thought behaviour was good in school.

Pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school and it works well with a variety of outside agencies to support individual pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers said their children feel safe in school and a very large majority of pupils agreed with this view. Pupils have lessons in a variety of areas to develop their awareness of their own safety including stranger danger and internet safety. They have a good understanding of the risks they face and how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. Attendance is above average and the number of persistent absentees is much lower than that found nationally. Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher and governing body have a clear vision for improvement in the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has clear identification of strengths and areas for development which match the findings of this inspection. The school strategic development plan, with its associated map and termly reporting to governors on the school's progress against key performance indicators, helps governors to monitor performance and ask challenging questions to ensure the improvement of the school. The school has successfully built on the strengths found at the previous inspection and successfully driven improvements. Middle leaders are increasingly taking on key roles in the development of the school. They have great confidence in the acting headteacher and say he is driving improvement in the school.

The impact of professional development and performance management is good. The

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school has successfully improved teaching since the last inspection; a particular strength has been the improvement in the teaching of mathematics. The curriculum is good; it gives priority to developing literacy and numeracy skills, with particular strengths in numeracy, and covers a breadth of subject areas with a cross-curricular approach to support pupils linking their learning across different subjects. It has rightly recognised, however, the need to provide pupils with a greater range of reading material to improve their appreciation of literature and to provide more opportunities to develop literacy skills in other subjects. The school provides a breakfast club which gives pupils a healthy start to the day and access to a range of activities, the most popular of which was being able to use the ICT suite. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sports, country dancing, knitting, sewing, French and a good range of instrumental teaching. Year 5 pupils are learning to play brass instruments in class. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum in lessons and assemblies. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school's commitment to the development of equal opportunities is evident in this inclusive community. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective.

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).

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.

18 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Hazlemere Church of England Combined School, High Wycombe, HP15 7PZ

We enjoyed meeting with you and talking with you to find out your views of your school. Thank you to everyone for making us feel welcome.

Your school provides many interesting activities for you to take part in. We particularly enjoyed watching the street dance performance with you and celebrating your achievements in the celebration assembly. It was lovely to see that so many of you had received house points in one week.

We judged your school to be good. It has improved since the previous inspection. We were pleased to see the interesting activities you were enjoying in your mathematics lessons and how well you are doing in all of your subjects. We were very impressed with how polite and courteous you were and how you got on with each other and your teachers in lessons.

To make the school even better we have asked staff to:

- give you more advice on how to improve your work so you know how to reach the next level
- develop the way teachers ask questions in lessons so that you can give longer answers and comment on each other's answers
- check up more closely on what works best in lessons to help you learn
- develop your literacy skills by giving you a wider range of texts to read and by making sure that your skills are developed in all subjects across the curriculum.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Williams
Lead inspector

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