



# Harpur Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 112523  
LEA Derbyshire

Inspection number 274763  
Inspection dates 13 - 14 June 2005  
Reporting inspector John Brennan

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Trent Avenue
School category	Community		Harpur Hill
Age range of pupils	4 - 11		Buxton
			SK17 9LP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01298 23261
Number on roll	334	Fax number	01298 22710
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Terry Corrigan
Date of previous inspection	September 1999	Headteacher	Mr Patrick O' Connor

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 - 11	July 2005	274763

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the Harpur Hill Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a larger than average primary school situated on the outskirts of Buxton. Most pupils who attend are from the immediate socially mixed area with a minority from nearby rural areas. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Harpur Hill Primary provides a sound education for its pupils, a view shared by the school. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children's education gets off to a good start. Pupils also enjoy good provision in Years 5 and 6 and, in the main, achieve well. In these parts of the school, teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities and the next steps in learning, and set pupils stimulating tasks that make them think hard. These elements are not as common in the teaching in Years 1 to 4. As a result, learning is not as strong and higher attaining pupils are capable of more. Teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour is good. Much of this is down to initiatives introduced by the headteacher. The school also takes good care of pupils.

The headteacher's collegiate approach, giving value to the views of staff, parents and pupils, has created a sense of harmony and optimism. Parents have every confidence in the school, as shown by the very positive response in their questionnaire returns. However, leadership at all levels is less effective in monitoring and developing teaching and learning. Although the school now looks at performance data from end of year tests, it does not track the pupils' performance during the year well enough, or use the key messages from its analysis in its improvement planning. Standards are not high enough in science because its development has not been given enough prominence. The school feels its capacity to improve is good. Although the unifying of the school gives cause for such optimism, the shortcomings in management hamper this. Inspector views are that the capacity to improve is satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

**Grade: 3**

### What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- the way the headteacher, subject leaders and governors monitor the work of the school, especially teaching and learning, and act on the messages that this reveals
- improving the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4
- raising standards in science in Years 3 to 6.

## Achievement and standards

From a starting point that is a little below average children in Reception progress well. By the beginning of Year 1, almost all have reached expected

levels and a significant number have progressed beyond these. Pupils do particularly well in their personal and social development. Progress slows in Years 1 to 4 where teaching is weaker than elsewhere in the school. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are average but below average in mathematics; they have declined in the past two years. Higher attaining pupils in particular are capable of more and mark time in the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills.

Progress picks up in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are clear about what pupils need to do next to improve and tasks are engaging. Pupils progress well to reach above average standards in English and mathematics. Results have gone up at a quicker rate than those found nationally. However, pupils do not do as well in science and standards are below average.

Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the additional support they receive is well directed. The school has put right shortcomings in information and communication technology noted in the last inspection; progress is satisfactory and pupils reach the levels expected for their age.

**Grade: 3**

### **Personal development and well-being**

The school is right to celebrate the significant and recent progress in improving pupils' personal development; the inspection team judges this area to be satisfactory with some strong features. Not all teachers are as successful as others in improving pupils' attitudes. Learning is not always engaging enough to achieve this and a small number of boys have unsatisfactory attitudes to school. However, almost all pupils behave well. Pupils like coming to school; attendance is good. Pupils are interested in healthy eating and almost all pupils consider the rewards for hard work and good behaviour worthwhile. Pupils feel safe and most work constructively together. Older pupils organise events to help raise funds for the school and charities and make a good start in understanding and playing a part in the community. Parents confirm that relationships are good. Pupils know right from wrong and respect school rules. They take seriously the responsibilities they have, such as serving on the school's council and being playground buddies. Pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding is adequate. Pupils enjoyed the recent African experience, learning much about the music and art of Zimbabwe.

**Grade: 3**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but significant variations in quality exist. Almost all teachers establish positive relationships with pupils; classrooms are largely pleasant places to work in. The ability to build on this sets the good teaching apart from that which is satisfactory. This is most often the case in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Here introductions and the use of strategies such as 'talk partners' and interactive whiteboards grab pupils' attention. Lessons move at a brisk pace and activities are interesting. In Year 6, for example, pupils applied various mathematical skills when dealing with the demands of planning a holiday itinerary for a family with very particular requirements. Teachers have good knowledge of the level of work to expect and tasks challenge pupils of all abilities.

In Years 1 to 4 these features are less common. A shaky knowledge of expectations can result in all pupils doing the same work, which is often too easy for higher attaining pupils. Tasks can be mundane and do not help pupils acquire a thirst for learning. Planning does not always indicate what pupils will learn so that the end of some lessons is not used well enough for assessing learning and deciding next steps. Teaching can become unsatisfactory when weak questioning and demonstrations leave pupils unprepared for what they are to do; pupils switch off and little is learnt.

Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons. For example, pupils who have special educational needs receive the individual help they need so that they make progress as they should. Staff help pupils just enough, ensuring that they do not become too reliant on adult help.

**Grade: 3**

### Curriculum and other activities

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory, although the school feels it is good. Children in the single year group Reception classes enjoy their learning through play but older Reception children who work alongside those in Year 1 do not have access to such a wide range of activities. For the most part the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 gives pupils an adequate variety of experiences and fulfils statutory requirements. However, pupils in the juniors do not do enough science. The school has worked well to improve provision for information and communication technology; the curriculum is broader and resources improved. Theme days and other longer events such as the 'Arts' week are well liked by pupils; they provide a break from routine and give pupils a chance to work in

different and challenging ways. Provision for pupils who have behavioural needs is good and, for those who need help with their work, is satisfactory. However, the needs of talented and gifted pupils have not given been enough thought. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, introducing pupils to new activities such as chess and develops their sporting and creative skills. Pupils' awareness of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle and of their immediate surroundings is enhanced by their work on the Healthy School's programme and the ECO School's project

**Grade: 3**

### **Care, guidance and support**

Teachers care well for pupils because they know them individually; pupils' concerns are taken seriously. They are involved in making decisions, for example, through the school council, which has chosen new playground equipment. Behaviour is effectively monitored and managed. The office staff keep a close check on attendance. The school has very good procedures to ensure that all the school does is safe.

Pupils have appropriate written targets that show them what to do to improve. The targets pupils have in Foundation Stage are very well organised and children see their progress very clearly. Where teacher knowledge is weaker targets are not always pitched at the right level to lead pupils on. Pupils with special educational needs have good support, particularly those who have behavioural needs. The 'Jungle Room' helps pupils who have a negative view of themselves, or of school, to feel good and re-engage with school.

**Grade: 2**

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's collegiate approach creates good team-spirit and a sense of optimism because views of staff, parents and pupils are taken into account when setting priorities. Actions to promote good behaviour have been well led, achieving a suitable climate for learning. Parents have noticed significant improvements in partnership and behaviour.

Actions to improve standards have been less effective. Staff work hard but not always with success. Apart from performance management procedures, too little is being done to check on and improve the quality of teaching and learning so significant variations in quality exist. Well targeted external expertise used

to boost teaching has insufficient impact on pupils' learning because progress within these groups is not checked up on closely enough. Some weaknesses identified by analysis of performance, for example in higher attaining pupils in the infants and in science in the juniors, are not part of the School Improvement Plan. Action planning within this plan lacks detail and milestones to guide monitoring; there is insufficient emphasis on the regular evaluation of the impact of measures taken throughout the year leaving too much to end of year reviews. Very supportive governors, together with the headteacher, have raised the school's profile within the community. Revisions to committee structures put governors in a position to hold the school to account. However plans to acquire the necessary skills for this evaluative role are underdeveloped.

**Grade: 3**



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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>3</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>3</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>3</b>

### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>3</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>3</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>3</b>

### **THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>3</b>

**Annex A**

How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>4</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>3</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>3</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are educated about sexual health.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	<b>Yes</b>
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	<b>Yes</b>
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	<b>Yes</b>
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	<b>NA</b>
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	<b>NA</b>

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Harpur Hill Primary School  
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Harpur Hill  
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SK17 9LP

14 June 2005

Dear Children

We were pleased to visit your school a couple of weeks ago. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school and the work you have done.

From our work with yourselves and the school staff we noticed that:

- ❖ The school takes good care of you.
- ❖ You behave well and that the school helps you in this. You made it clear to us that behaviour was getting better all the time.
- ❖ The headteacher, staff and governors of the school listen to you and your parents and take note of what you have to say.

We feel that your school would get better still if:

- ❖ You were given work more often that is interesting and that makes you think hard.
- ❖ You were to do more science so that you can get better still.

We have asked the headteacher, teachers and governors to check that these things happen and work well.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Brennan  
Reporting Inspector