



Harrow Gate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111643
LEA Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 278739
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Barbara Hudson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Piper Knowle Road
School category	Community		Stockton-on-Tees
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Cleveland, TS19 8DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 673984
Number on roll	390	Fax number	01642 608945
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jane Pegg
Date of previous inspection	1 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Collinson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Harrow Gate Primary is located in one of the most deprived areas of the country. The attainment of children when they start nursery is well below average. A high proportion of the children take free school meals and 20% have learning difficulties. Almost all children are of white British heritage; of those from minority ethnic groups, 5% are at the early stages of learning English. The school has achieved many awards in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. The headteacher's excellent vision has ensured that it is a caring and welcoming place where children are keen to learn. Staff, governors, parents and children are justifiably very proud of their school. Children's personal development is outstanding. This is because of the excellent contributions all staff make to caring for and supporting them. Children achieve well. Overall standards are improving, and more quickly in Years 3 to 6. Standards in writing, however, are very low and the school has recently introduced a very good plan to correct this. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good although opportunities to develop children's writing skills are often missed. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good because the staff have created a very good learning environment where children are nurtured and thrive. Focused leadership and management and very good team work ensure that this school is well placed to make further improvements. The school has successfully overcome the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Value for money is good.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's writing skills across the whole curriculum.
- Mark children's writing thoroughly in all subjects to show them what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Most children start nursery well below the expected level for their age. They make good progress throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, achieve average standards overall but still very low in writing. In 2005, there was improvement in the results of the tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is the first improvement for some time in Year 2. This success has come about because the teachers track individual children more closely and use the information to plan lessons to match the children's ability. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the improvements achieved in 2005 are being sustained and further developed. Staff are very aware of the need to improve children's writing skills and have made this the major focus of their work. Inspection evidence supports their view that standards are beginning to improve. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds, those learning to speak English and those with learning difficulties make good progress because teaching assistants give them good support, work is well matched to their needs and progress is tracked very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Inspectors found this aspect of the school's work outstanding although the school judges it to be good. Behaviour is excellent. Children are caring, considerate and polite. They achieve well because all adults contribute to a very caring school that encourages children to do their best. Children say they feel safe and enjoy school very much. Staff are very good at praising and encouraging children when they do something well and helping them to resolve difficulties. Spiritual, moral and social development is excellent overall. Children respect each other. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They co-operate very well. They are taught to respect their own and other peoples' cultures. Very young children are learning to understand their feelings.

The school actively encourages healthy lifestyles through at least two hours of physical education per week, water in the classrooms and a very good personal, social and health education curriculum. Children actively contribute to the school community through the school and class councils and to the wider community through their charity work and writing articles for the local newspaper. Children have a good start in preparation for their future education and employment and understand money matters well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school and inspectors agree that the overall quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, some examples of outstanding teaching were observed in the classes for the oldest pupils. The school's self evaluation correctly identifies that in the best lessons teachers motivate and inspire pupils to learn. They use a very good range of teaching strategies and resources. In these lessons work is carefully matched to pupils' needs and interests and they make rapid progress. In the satisfactory and good lessons teachers make lessons interesting although they often talk for too long rather than letting the children complete their tasks. This is most noticeable when children are given insufficient time to complete writing tasks. Teaching assistants play an important role by helping children to participate and make progress. Assessment is good overall. Analysis of children's progress and test data is excellent and this is helping teachers to plan their work better. Children know and understand their targets. Marking of work is good in English; in other subjects it is inconsistent. Writing is not emphasised enough in all subjects and therefore children are not consolidating and improving their skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspection team and the school agree that the curriculum is good. The excellent range of activities provided in the nursery and reception classes enable children to learn and make progress. In Years 1 to 6 teachers plan units of work that are exciting, relevant and meaningful. They link together a number of subjects into a theme and this approach is helping to motivate and interest the children. However, teachers do not always identify opportunities for children to write for extended periods of time in all subjects. This means that children's achievement in writing is not as good as it should be.

Enrichment activities are impressive. School clubs are varied and well attended. Children enjoy a wide variety of outings such as a visit to Robin Wood and they are excited about a forthcoming visit to London.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding aspect although the school judges it to be good. Staff's commitment to the care of the children is impressive. The school places a strong emphasis on health and safety issues. Children say they feel safe and are well supported by excellent relationships with all adults. Children in the nursery settle quickly because of the caring and nurturing atmosphere. Children with learning or emotional problems are very well supported by staff who ensure time is available to share worries and meet their needs. Children know what they can do and are very clear about how they need to improve. The school works very well with parents and has very good working partnership with a number of agencies, including the local secondary school. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out rigorously.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges its leadership and management as good and the inspectors agree. Some aspects are outstanding. The headteacher is determined to achieve excellence in all aspects of school life. Her excellent vision and considerable efforts were demonstrated by a group of children enthusiastically agreeing with a child who said 'I love this school. It is wonderful'. All staff make a positive contribution to the outstanding personal development that children achieve. They ensure all children are included in all activities. Team work is very good and this is helping the school to sustain its strengths and make further improvements. Recent improvements in the national test results reflect the good impact that the subject leaders, with their teams, are now having. The analysis of children's progress and national test results by the senior leadership team is excellent and this is helping teachers improve standards. Key stage leaders are good at helping their team members to take on new ideas. The

school's self evaluation, which takes into account views from everybody connected to the school, is generally accurate but does not always focus on the outcomes of the work of the school. The school has successfully dealt with the issues from the last inspection. Governance is good. Governors are well informed, closely evaluate the school's progress and are good ambassadors for the school. Everyone, including the children and parents, is justifiably very proud of the school and all work hard to achieve its vision statement: 'To be the best I can'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Harrow Gate Primary School
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14 October 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. The inspectors all thought that you were very polite, friendly and helpful and we understand why you are very proud of your school.

We think that your school is a caring and welcoming place and that everyone looks after you exceptionally well. We know Mrs Collinson wants to make your school the very best. With the teachers and other adults, she has made the school a safe, happy and exciting place where you can learn very well. Your excellent behaviour helps teachers to do their job and even those of you who find school difficult know that you can get help if you need it. We think the teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. Teachers put a lot of effort into making your lessons interesting and enjoyable. We were very pleased with the number of children who told us that they enjoy school very much and that lessons are fun. Many of you were very enthusiastic about the school's clubs and the visits that you make to places of interest.

We have asked Mrs Collinson and your teachers to make the school even better by helping you to improve your writing skills.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Hudson

Inspector

Annex B