



Halifax Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124670
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281777
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. David Jones LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Prince Of Wales Drive
School category	Community		IP2 8PY
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473683932
Number on roll	328	Fax number	01473683932
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Irene Wragg
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Kevin Tomlin

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	Inspection number 281777
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two HMI accompanied by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Halifax Primary is a large school. The school is close to the Ipswich town centre and the local population represents a wide mix of social backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. Pupils are mostly of white British heritage, although there are some from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements is above average. Attainment on entry is below average. In the last year the school has been through turbulent times; that has included significant staff changes. The governing body have struggled to recruit new members and currently four vacancies exist.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. The school has some strengths, including the caring and inclusive approach strongly supported by senior managers and the efforts made by many staff. Most of the pupils have positive attitudes. However, weaknesses exist in: leadership and management; the quality of teaching; standards of achievement; the behaviour of a significant number of the pupils in each year group; and the balance of curriculum provision. The school judges all aspects of provision as satisfactory; inspectors do not agree because the school's self evaluation is generous and insufficiently rigorous. Two fifths of the parents who responded to the parental questionnaire expressed concerns regarding behaviour management or the leadership of the school. The LEA has recently placed the school on its cause for concern register. Although standards of attainment show some improvement in 2005, they have not regained the position achieved in 2002 and the pattern of decline has remained unchecked for three years. The quality of provision and the standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. However, the educational continuity into Key Stage 1 is inadequate, a criticism noted in the last inspection report. The school has made inadequate progress since the last inspection and does not provide value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of leadership and management through the use of rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring lessons are well planned and sufficiently challenging to raise standards
- use assessment data to regularly monitor pupil progress
- use time more effectively and improve the balance of the curriculum
- secure consistency in the management of pupil behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards across the school have declined since 2002. Most seven-year olds reach average standards in mathematics but their performance in reading and writing is not as good. The overall performance of older pupils of all abilities fails to meet the national expectations. Standards reached by 11 year olds are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. There is a significant variation in the pupils' achievements between subjects. The unverified results of the 2005 national tests indicate improvements in reading and science but considerable weakness in writing and mathematics. The school has failed to meet its own targets. In lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, progress in Key Stage 2 varies because of poor behaviour and inconsistencies in the level of

challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties often make satisfactory progress because of the support they receive. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates a significant number of average and higher achieving children underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school judges provision in this area to be good; inspectors judge the provision to be satisfactory. Staff work hard to support pupils and to provide positive role models. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and the attitudes of the majority are positive, although a number of them have low self-esteem and negative views about education. There is some evidence to suggest a recent improvement in behaviour. However, the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils continues to have an impact on the whole school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies often celebrate pupils' achievement or examine social and moral themes, although they do not always comply with the statutory requirements for collective worship. Until recently the pupils had few opportunities to be involved in the running of the school. However, members of the new school council have already paid considerable attention to the views of their fellow pupils. Some fund raising initiatives, such as participation in the Tsunami Appeal and the Shona Smile appeal, have come from the pupils themselves. Older pupils benefit from links with the local secondary school; however, the working relationship with a local pupil referral unit has not had a positive impact on behaviour. Although attendance rates are satisfactory overall, the number of unauthorised absences is three times the national average and is having a negative impact on the learning of the children involved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The school believes that the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory; inspectors do not agree. Although nearly half the lessons were good, inadequate teaching was seen on too many occasions. In the best lessons, good use was made of open-ended questions which extended pupils' oral skills. The pace and challenge of the lesson engaged the pupils' attention and enabled them to make good progress. Strategies for managing the class were good. These lessons were well planned and focused clearly on the pupils' learning needs. Lesson objectives were made clear at the outset and revisited at the end to gauge success. In lessons that were just satisfactory overall there were a number of areas for development. Some tasks lacked imagination, pace or challenge with the result that opportunities to make children think hard and engage in discussion were missed. Where teaching was inadequate there were common weaknesses in planning lessons which lacked challenge because the work was too easy. Time was not used effectively and the pupils were not organised in ways that encouraged their full participation. In these lessons the management of pupil behaviour was ineffective. Time wasting and poor behaviour were not dealt with promptly. The

school has a range of assessment data but admits to being unable to track the progress of pupils. Most pupils were unable to explain what they need to learn next. Marking varies considerably both in style and consistency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The school's curriculum is inadequate. It provides a reasonably broad but unbalanced range of activities. Teaching time is lost because of poor planning and delivery during short sessions; for example, in guided reading. Although a substantial proportion of the school day is devoted to literacy and numeracy this has not had a significant impact on improving standards. The provision for other subjects lacks structure and coherence, hindering the pupils' development of basic skills. Satisfactory attention is paid to pupils' learning to stay safe and healthy. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good; however, the provision for 'Gifted and Talented' pupils is inadequate. The school council and parents would like to extend the range of enrichment activities, which is limited. A variety of clubs, sports and school visits exists and provision for the early morning 'Breakfast Swims' is particularly enjoyed by pupils. The school does not monitor the balance of the curriculum; consequently tasks do not always match the pupils learning needs. A curriculum review has recently been initiated.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges care, guidance and support to be good, but inspectors found this to be satisfactory overall. The school has a caring ethos that supports all pupils in their learning and personal development. The care for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and these pupils make good progress. However, the school's system for dealing with the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of the pupils is ineffective and inconsistent. This stops others learning. Pupils are generally happy in school; they say it provides a safe environment for them where staff are caring and helpful if they have problems. However, some children worry about the behaviour of others. A fifth of all parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Though the majority of responses were positive to most questions, of those who responded, a significant proportion expressed their dissatisfaction with how behaviour is dealt with in school. Teachers know the pupils well but assessment information is not always collected and used consistently to help all pupils achieve higher standards. Not all pupils are sufficiently aware of their personal targets or given sufficient guidance on what they should do to achieve them. Some parents of children with learning needs and disabilities are unhappy that the school failed to inform them of the decisions taken in the summer term regarding assessments of their child's learning difficulties. The new special educational needs coordinator has made good progress in addressing this issue. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate. The headteacher has put a great deal of effort into the development of an inclusive school but been unable to check the decline in standards of achievement in the last three years. The use of resources is satisfactory. However, strategic management is inadequate as are the monitoring and evaluation of provision and the management of the pupils' behaviour. The deputy headteacher does not have the time to manage the conflicting demands of her extensive responsibilities. The governing body has failed to provide the challenge required in the role of critical friend; however, they have recently agreed to the local authority's decision to place the school on their cause for concern register. The role of the subject co-ordinators is under-developed. New coordinators have been appointed in a number of areas but staff have only recently begun to use data to track how well individual pupils are progressing. Weaknesses such as the lack of challenge and expectation of progress from year to year are beginning to become apparent, notably in mathematics. Subject leaders have not had the opportunity to look in detail at the quality of children's work, the balance of curricular provision and the quality of teaching within their subject area. Reviews of the quality of teaching by senior managers have failed to focus on lesson outcomes; they have been inconsistent in style and overly positive. All the lesson observations conducted have failed to offer a judgement on the quality of provision. As a result there has been no accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The new school improvement plan has recently introduced a range of initiatives, these are still in the very early stages and have yet to impact on the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. Consequently the school has not demonstrated the capacity to improve further.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	4	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school earlier this month. Everyone we spoke to was very friendly and polite. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school. These are the things we thought were going well. - Your teachers care about all of you and work hard to look after you. - Most of you say you enjoy coming to school and want to do your best. - Your teachers are good at helping those of you who find your work hard. The school has some problems but we know everyone wants to do better and we have suggested a few things that we think will help. We have asked: - those who help to run the school to check how well it is organised and managed. They are keen to make sure it all works well. - your teachers to make more of your lessons interesting and helpful. - the staff to check closely on your progress to see where you are improving and what else you need to do. - that enough time is spent on all subjects. This will help you to learn. And you can contribute to improvements by coming to school on time and behaving well so you can learn.