



Preston Hedges Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131123
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 282171
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wootton Hope Drive
School category	Community		Wootton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Northampton, Northamptonshire NN4 6BU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 665860
Number on roll	425	Fax number	01604 665861
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sharon Smith
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Gibbons

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Preston Hedges is a larger-than-average primary school. Most of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. In some year groups, the percentage is well above average. In the current Year 6, for example, nearly one third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. A significant number of pupils join the school between Years 3 and 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This happy and friendly school provides a good education, and has a number of outstanding features. This is also the school's view. Pupils are very well cared for. The curriculum is outstanding and pupils develop exceptional personal skills. The creative arts are a strength of the school. Pupils' singing, for example, is of a high standard and their very good art work is displayed throughout the school. The school's popularity with pupils and parents was summed up by a member of the school council who said, 'Our school is special.' Children are given a good start in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress and, by the time they begin Year 1, have achieved standards that are higher than normally expected. The vast majority of pupils achieve well so that standards are above average by Year 6. This is the result of good teaching throughout the school. Occasionally, when expectations drop, teaching is only satisfactory and the rate of learning slows.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She has played a very significant role in bringing the school to where it is now. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified at the last inspection and the capacity to improve further is good. The teamwork amongst the staff is exceptional and a noticeable feature of the school. Parents are impressed by their hard work and professionalism. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers have high expectations all of the time, so that the quality of teaching is always at least good, and all pupils are fully extended.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. As a result of good teaching, the pupils' positive attitude to learning and the school's thorough systems for tracking progress, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Children start school with broadly average levels of attainment, although attainment has been lower than average in some year groups with a significant number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get a good start to school and make good progress. Many in the present classes will exceed the levels expected by the time they start Year 1. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress.

Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 and the vast majority of pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least good progress as a result of well-focused support. Much of their progress is very good. The school has high expectations and pupils are set challenging but realistic targets, which they achieve. This process contributes well to the good progress seen throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They say they feel safe and happy and they work and play harmoniously inside school and around the grounds. All pupils enjoy school enormously. 'Lessons are fun, you learn a lot and everyone's involved,' said one older pupil. Attendance is good. Older pupils take on many responsibilities, such as playground buddies, for which they receive training. Younger pupils look up to the older pupils, who are providing very good role models. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to keep safe. They move around the school very sensibly and use resources, such as computer equipment, maturely.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to understand the consequences of their actions. Assemblies are well used to provide moments of spiritual reflection. The school provides good opportunities to widen pupils' understanding of the diverse society they live in. Pupils make a very good contribution to the school and to the wider community. For example, they participate in many musical and dramatic events with other schools and they plan fund raising for charities. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles is demonstrated in the very high uptake of the many sporting activities provided. Pupils identify the benefits of eating fruit at break time and understand the need to drink water regularly. The good teaching of basic skills, together with the excellent opportunities pupils have to work in pairs and teams and to take responsibility, prepares them exceptionally well for their future and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils feel that their teachers know them very well and these strong relationships contribute positively to their attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour. Pupils co-operate well in small groups and are happy to work independently. Based on their good use of assessment information, the vast majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers' marking helps pupils move to the next stage of learning. Pupils are also very good at self-assessment and talk confidently about using their individual learning targets for improving their work. Occasionally, teaching is only satisfactory. Learning is not so effective because expectations are lower. Most lessons are lively and enjoyable and teachers' enthusiasm for learning is infectious. Classrooms provide a calm, organised but highly stimulating environment for learning. Teachers help all pupils to take an active part in lessons by planning work carefully to make sure it is well matched to the needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are proficient and are valued as essential members of the teaching team. Their support enables pupils

with learning difficulties to make good and often better progress towards their individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It supports pupils' good achievements and outstanding personal development very well. Teachers provide an excellent range of enjoyable and inspirational activities for their pupils. These are thoughtfully planned to make learning stimulating and relevant. The curriculum is enriched by a strong focus on the arts. Older pupils, for example, spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about a filmed puppet version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The use of 'workshop' and 'celebration days' encourages creativity and innovation in pupils' learning and they thoroughly enjoy visitors such as dancers, body percussionists and film-makers, who come to school to share their skills. ICT provision has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. The school provides a very wide selection of additional activities for all age groups. The resulting good levels of take-up reflect the pupils' enthusiasm and interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully. Pupils are given good guidance on what they have to do to improve and reach their personal learning targets. These procedures help them to make good progress.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and enables these pupils to make consistently good progress. The school works exceptionally well with external agencies, ensuring additional support is provided for more vulnerable pupils. One parent, typical of many, reporting on the school's response to her child's needs said, 'The staff are exceptional. They willingly pursue every option to improve and enrich my child's experience at school.'

All statutory requirements for child protection and health and safety are met. Pupils feel safe and understand they can turn to any member of staff for help. Gifted and talented pupils are catered for exceptionally well. There are good procedures to identify them and they are provided with opportunities during the year to excel in the subjects they are good at.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, who is leaving at the end of the summer term, provides outstanding leadership. She has led the school since it has opened and leaves a strong legacy. She has created a school that is innovative as well as providing good practice. This can be seen in the above-average standards and the

pupils' outstanding personal development. Parents speak highly of the school and are pleased that the school appoints high quality staff who quickly adapt to the 'Preston Hedges' way of doing things. All staff work exceptionally well together as a team. Staff are provided with many good opportunities to develop professionally.

Leaders and managers at all levels have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is no complacency and they are always looking at ways to improve. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and this and the contribution of its leadership and management have led to significant improvements since its last inspection. The school has the capacity to get even better. Recent improvements in the teaching of science across the school are an indication of this. The views of parents and pupils are considered important and valued. They are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation process. The school strives hard to ensure that pupils receive good teaching all of the time. However, very occasionally, this is not achieved. The work of the governing body is good. Governors provide the school with good support and are actively involved in the school's evaluation and strategic planning.

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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	2	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	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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

Dear Pupils

As many of you know, we recently visited to see how well your school is doing. We would like to thank you for looking after us and being so friendly when we saw you in your classrooms and around the school. Thank you for talking to us sensibly and confidently about your school, the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school.

What we liked most about your school

- You are extremely well behaved and enjoy school a great deal.
- You have a fantastic headteacher who has done so much to ensure that you come to a great school.
- Your school is a healthy and safe place to be and you get on well with each other.
- Most of you do well and achieve good standards in your work because of the good teaching.
- The work you do in subjects like art and music is of a high standard.
- Teachers and other staff in the school look after you really well.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that all of you are challenged to do your very best in every lesson.

Best wishes to everyone at Preston Hedges.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead Inspector