



# Hesters Way Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131250  
**LEA** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 282186  
**Inspection dates** 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Knight RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Dill Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Cheltenham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL51 0ES
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 525616
<b>Number on roll</b>	205	<b>Fax number</b>	01242 525 678
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Davidson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Hesters Way Primary School is an average-sized school in Cheltenham. The area it serves is one of considerable social disadvantage. Almost all the pupils are White British, with a very small number of mixed heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. Over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is rather higher than the national figure.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

The school does not provide a satisfactory standard of education and its overall effectiveness is inadequate. As a result, it does not give value for money. The school acknowledges these weaknesses in its own self-evaluation, which is rigorous and of high quality. The school has declined in its effectiveness since its previous inspection; achievement, teaching and the curriculum are all now unsatisfactory. However, since the appointment of the headteacher in April, improvements have taken place in the quality of marking and assessment, the rigour of self-assessment and strategic planning, the behaviour of pupils, and the establishment of an open 'can-do' culture. These improvements, secured in a very short time, indicate a strong capacity for further improvement within the school. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children arrive in the school with standards that are considerably lower than average, especially in their language skills, and make good progress. Most attain the expected goals for learning by Year 1.

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards achieved in the school and the quality of teaching, especially the expectations of the most capable pupils.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- improve achievement by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and setting work that accurately reflects all pupils' needs, including those of the most capable
- closely monitor the curriculum to ensure that all the required areas are covered.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Most children enter the Nursery with standards that are considerably below average, especially in their language skills. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes enables children to make good progress so that most attain the standards expected by the end of Reception. Last year, around a third entered Year 1 already working at the early levels of the National Curriculum.

In 2004, standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below average and exceptionally low in reading. The provisional results for 2005 are lower, with a decline in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, the test results in 2004 were average in English, but very low in mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2005 are lower still. In 2004 and 2005, few pupils in Years 2 and 6 gained the highest levels. The targets set by the school in the past have not been challenging enough, but this is now being done with increasing rigour. The most capable pupils are not doing well

enough because the teaching does not cater for their needs closely enough. Most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are not making sufficient progress and are underachieving when account is taken of their starting points. In the past, the school has focused its attention on the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. This has enabled these pupils to make satisfactory progress, and this continues to be the case. Grade: 4

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

### **Grade: 3**

The school works effectively to control behaviour and, as a result, it is improving and is now satisfactory. Firm action has been taken to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Children settle well because of the clear routines established in the Nursery and Reception classes. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 still find it difficult to listen and concentrate, although teachers and assistants are energetic in holding their attention. Most pupils learn to behave well in class and around school, reflecting the high priority given to their moral and social development. Pupils have opportunities to take on duties around the school and to take responsibility, to which they respond positively.

Relationships are good and pupils feel safe, knowing who to turn to if they need help. Playtimes are a happy experience for all, with quiet areas and new play equipment. Organised games for older pupils are very well led, giving talented pupils the chance to shine. Pupils help each other in shared class tasks and report how well they enjoy their time in school. However, they still lack opportunities to take the initiative in lessons, for instance in planning and carrying out their own investigations in science.

Grade: 3

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teaching in the Nursery and Reception is good. Planning is based closely on the expected goals for learning, with imaginative tasks to engage young learners and drive their progress.

Adults work together effectively as a team, engaging children in discussion that improves their social skills and language well. As a result, progress is good.

Standards are not high enough in Years 1 to 6 because teaching too often lacks challenge. Consequently, progress is limited and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Assessment has not been used effectively in the past to ensure that tasks are closely matched to pupils' needs often enough. For example, in one mathematics lesson, the most capable were expected to match the names of polygons to the number of sides. Although they should have met these names before, they did not know them. This task neither reinforced nor extended learning, as pupils simply made wild guesses.

The school's own monitoring has already identified that expectations are too low. Rigorous targets for improvement have been set and checked up on since the headteacher's appointment in April. Some improvements are already evident. For example, presentation is better, marking is now regular and more helpful and all classes have better mathematics planning that is tightly monitored to ensure coverage. Behaviour in class has improved, partly because the approach to managing behaviour is more consistent.

Grade: 4

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 4**

Although staff successfully plan an interesting curriculum which is well resourced and includes stimulating visits and special events, its organisation has several weaknesses. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception is well planned so that they learn effectively through practical activities. Planning for Years 1 to 6 is broadly based on national guidelines but pupils do not make the progress that they should, year on year. One major reason for this is that tasks are not adjusted well enough for pupils of differing ability. Additionally, literacy, numeracy and the skills of information and communication technology are not emphasised enough in all subjects, so pupils miss opportunities to work on their weaknesses. There is too much variation in the time allocated to each subject from year to year. Some literacy lessons are well short of an hour.

Staff try to boost pupils' interest by linking subjects through a theme. However, this results in a complicated curriculum whose effectiveness is difficult to monitor. Pupils with learning difficulties make sound progress because the targets in their individual educational plans are well informed by assessment and adjusted regularly. The range of after-class activities has improved and is now satisfactory. The school provides a sound range of sporting activities. Lunchtimes are very well organised so that pupils learn to play together, choosing from a stimulating range of equipment.

Grade: 4

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

In all classes, there are close personal relationships between adults and pupils. Individuals are given warm encouragement and so feel confident that they are valued and safe. Such support is generally effective and no misbehaviour was seen in lessons, although staff report occasional difficulties in controlling a few older boys. Specialist staff from the pastoral support team are a valuable resource in helping pupils with the most serious difficulties. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Academic support and guidance is less secure but is developing. Assessment procedures are sufficient to guide staff in planning to meet pupils' individual needs. The school has begun to set academic targets to guide class and group progress in basic skills, but this is underdeveloped.

Grade: 3

## Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory because the new leadership team have demonstrated a strong capacity to improve. Since April, the new headteacher, building on the work started by his deputy, has carried out a rigorous audit and instituted a number of improvements which are already having an impact. These include:

more consistent management of behaviour

the start of a strong 'can-do' culture, focused on achievement. For example, one teaching assistant said to inspectors that, 'The school is better ... routines are clearer ... and we are to make sure that (pupils) achieve and learn. We are not just about caring for them'.

enhancing the role of subject leaders in checking provision in their subjects

introducing regular assessments to identify underachievement and to ensure that tasks can be matched more closely to pupils' needs.

This process of self-evaluation was wide-ranging and included questionnaires to staff, parents and others with an interest in the school. The honest and forthright appraisal of the causes of underachievement resulted in a substantial school improvement plan with appropriate and challenging targets for improvement. The high focus on pastoral care has been maintained. However, the process of ensuring that expectations in lessons are rigorous and will lead to improved achievement is still in its infancy.

The governing body is supportive of the school and has its best interests firmly at heart. However, it has not satisfactorily discharged its duties as a 'critical friend' to the school, nor in terms of strategic planning, because it has been too ready to rely on the headteacher for information rather than to actively find out answers or challenge the school to explain. The school improvement plan allows for substantial development of these roles over the year.

Grade: 3





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
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**

Hesters Way Primary School Dill Avenue Cheltenham GL51 0ES

12th October 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school in October. We really enjoyed watching you work and chatting with you in lessons and around the school. Thank you for being polite and helping us when we were not sure where to go.

What we liked most about the school

Children in the Nursery and Reception learn lots of new things because the teachers and grown-ups there really understand how to help children learn and have fun.

Lots of you enjoy your lessons. Even though a few of you find it hard to behave well, we thought behaviour was fine.

Your new headteacher and the teachers are really trying hard to make the school better for you.

What we have asked your school to do now

Sometimes the work your teachers ask you to do is too easy or too hard. We've asked your teachers to make sure your work is just hard enough, but not too hard!

Not all classes did everything they were supposed to last year, so we have asked your teachers to make sure that all classes do everything they should from now on.

How you can help

You can help your teachers by always trying very hard to do what you're asked, even if it's different to how lessons have been before.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knight Lead Inspector