



# St Catherine's Hoddesdon CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133773  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 282379  
**Inspection dates** 27 April 2006 to 28 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Haslewood Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		EN11 8HT
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 463214
<b>Number on roll</b>	252	<b>Fax number</b>	01992 447251
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Rev. Jeremy Brooks
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Wayne Howsen

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 April 2006 - 28 April 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282379
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving the central area of the town of Hoddesdon. It opened in 2003, amalgamating former separate infant and junior schools. This is the school's first inspection. Over 90% of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder representing a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Almost all pupils speak English as their first or main language. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Children are admitted to the school with a very wide range of attainment which, overall, is below average. In recent years, on joining the Reception classes, the school's assessments show that children's competence in language has been particularly low.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school considers that its effectiveness is good and inspectors agree. Since it opened as a new school three years ago, the quality of education has steadily improved and standards have risen each year as a result. The headteacher's very energetic and enthusiastic leadership has ensured that the staff have become a united team. There is a strong commitment to further improvement and high expectations of what can be achieved by staff and pupils alike. The school gives good value for money. Pupils in all age groups achieve well because the overall standard of teaching is good. In the Foundation Stage, children get a good start, although the standards they reach are below nationally expected levels because of their low starting point. The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in national tests have risen in each of the past three years and were above average last year. Pupils' personal development is good and they enjoy school immensely. The school provides a good curriculum that gives a high priority to social, emotional and health education. Pupils receive good care, support and guidance. Their response to the encouragement to adopt healthy lifestyles has been outstanding. The next stage for the school's development is to ensure that all teaching comes more consistently close to the outstanding practice that is evident in several classes. Teachers assess pupils' progress well in the Foundation Stage and, in the rest of the school, in English and mathematics. The quality of assessment in other subjects, while broadly satisfactory, is not as strong. Teachers do not have such a clear view of standards as they do in literacy and numeracy. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's strong focus on staff and governor development is ensuring that the school's work is evaluated well and continues to improve. Pupils' and parents' views are overwhelmingly positive. With its current team of staff and governors, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good and outstanding teaching seen in several classes becomes the norm across the school as a whole. - Apply the good assessment practice in English and mathematics to other subjects, so that pupils are more involved in their own learning and teachers have a clearer picture of achievement and standards across the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From a below average starting point, pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well and quickly begin to develop vital language and social skills in particular. By Year 2 in recent years, pupils have reached standards in the annual teacher assessments that are broadly in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The current Year 2 pupils continue to achieve similar standards. Overall performance in the national tests in Year 6 has climbed steadily since the school opened. Standards were a little above the

national averages in 2005 and the results represented good progress for pupils in that year group. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils and most of these were exceeded last year. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to do well again in relation to their attainment in the tests taken when they were seven. The school is vigilant in checking the variations in the progress made by girls compared with boys. For example, it identified some underachievement by more able girls in writing, which was tackled by changes to the methods of teaching used.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. They talk about it as a 'fun school' with many different activities in lessons, in clubs and on trips, including residential visits. Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They feel that any misbehaviour is dealt with well by staff. They work well together in lessons. The school has made a positive effort to improve pupils' attendance, with praise and rewards for good attendance, as well as by following up absences. Attendance is now close to the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are strong links with the local church and, through visits and visitors to the school, pupils also develop a good understanding of the different cultures within their own society. The school council gives pupils good opportunities to take responsibility for helping to make changes in the school, such as how the playground is organised. Pupils also contribute to the wider community, for instance by providing Christmas gifts to the elderly. They are raising money to support a child in a village school in Toga linked to their project on African life. This work also contributes to their economic understanding, as each class attempts to raise a specific sum of money through its stall at a school fair. Pupils are gaining an extremely good understanding of the importance of a safe and healthy lifestyle. This is especially evident in the foods they choose at lunchtime and the high numbers who take advantage of sport and exercise activities offered by the school, in addition to the good amount of time allocated for physical education lessons.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. A significant proportion of the lessons seen were outstanding and none were less than satisfactory. This picture is also reflected in the quality of pupils' work in their books. In all age groups, teachers plan interesting lessons which motivate pupils to learn. The lessons are based on good assessment arrangements in the Foundation Stage, and in English and mathematics. Teachers use the available information well to plan the next stages of learning. Assessment in other subjects is satisfactory, but would benefit from more rigour in identifying pupils' individual levels of knowledge and skills. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies. Some is extremely good with comments which are diagnostic and helpful in enabling pupils to know how to improve. Other marking is limited to general comments and

does little to help pupils, particularly in Year 6. The most effective teachers question pupils very skilfully to draw out their ideas and involve them actively in their learning. They know their pupils well and establish a strong rapport with them. This generates a secure environment where pupils can investigate and try out new ideas with confidence. Teachers in the best lessons have high expectations and provide challenges which are readily accepted by the pupils. By adopting a wide range of methods and using resources such as computerised whiteboards very effectively, teachers enable pupils to develop their different styles of learning. Support staff play a significant role in helping and guiding pupils of all abilities, especially the lower attainers. In the few lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, work is not as demanding and the pace is slow, or pupils are not clear what they are expected to do, and lose concentration as a result.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Foundation Stage children benefit from a stimulating environment and activities that promote all aspects of their learning well. The curriculum in the rest of the school is planned carefully to meet all pupils' needs, including in the mixed age classes. Good attention is paid to developing basic skills and making the curriculum more creative and enjoyable through well planned links between subjects. Lessons increasingly give pupils opportunities to apply their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to other subjects. The good programme for extending pupils' personal, social and health education helps them to find out how to stay safe and healthy, and prepares them well for later life. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and there is a current focus on improving provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils enjoy, and parents value, the range of sporting and musical activities, which are well attended and enhance pupils' achievements. Other events, such as the drama workshop, 'activities afternoons' and the Mathematics Fair enrich the curriculum. The exciting opportunities presented by the residential visit to the Isle of Wight further extend pupils' learning and enjoyment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school cares well for its pupils. Procedures for child protection are secure and risk assessments are carried out thoroughly. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good, so that pupils feel well cared for and that there is someone they can turn to if they are in difficulty. Pupils know that good work and behaviour are recognised, for example in assemblies. The way teachers mark their work and set them targets for improvement is often good but would benefit from more consistency between classes. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including effective links with parents and relevant external agencies.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since the school opened, the headteacher and governors have worked effectively to ensure a good quality of education for pupils and their efforts are bearing fruit. Parents and pupils are extremely satisfied with the provision and many parents testify to significant improvements over the last three years. The headteacher is well respected and has successfully built a united team, mostly of staff who worked in the separate infant and junior schools prior to amalgamation. His determination to raise standards has been communicated well to staff and governors. Initiatives such as the 'Guaranteed Classroom Standards' policy and implementation of performance management arrangements have contributed well to developments. There is no complacency and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school continues to build on its achievements so far. A supportive and questioning governing body has a core of experienced and well informed governors and is led well by the chair. A strong ethos has been established, based on good relationships at all levels and on Christian values. Equal opportunities for pupils are promoted well. Subject leaders increasingly monitor their areas of responsibility well. They are set a particularly good example by two senior teachers who, as well as leading initiatives in literacy and numeracy, work very effectively with the headteacher to promote the school's overall development. The capacity to improve further is good. The headteacher continues to have high expectations of staff and pupils and encourages and motivates them. The school evaluates its performance accurately and knows how to maintain its strengths and address its weaknesses. Important partners such as the parents, pupils and other nearby schools are involved well in its development and their views are valued. They confirm that this good school provides well for the local community.

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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>	<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>	2	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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

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

<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	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 all for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You helped us to find out a lot about it. It was good to hear that you enjoy school enormously, that you think learning is fun and that children get on well together. We discovered that there are many good things about your school. You do well in your work because your teachers make most lessons interesting and challenging. Many of you take advantage of all the clubs and extra activities on offer. We were impressed with how your School Council works and wish you luck with your plans for stalls for the Maths Fair. We hope you raise plenty of money for your charity and have fun in the process. We were pleased to see how well you are trying to lead a healthy lifestyle by eating good food and taking plenty of exercise. Keep up the good work! We think that Mr Howsen has worked very well with your teachers to make sure that your school runs well, and your parents agree with us. The school has achieved a great deal in its three year history. The teachers and governors work together well to make sure the school keeps on improving. We talked to them about some ways to make it even better. They agree with us that they would like all your lessons to be as good as the best ones and want to keep trying to make this happen. They regularly check how well you are doing in English and mathematics and tell you how to improve. We think that they could do more checking in other subjects too so that they know exactly what they need to teach you next. It was a pleasure to meet you. Carry on making the most of all your school has to offer.