



Hurst Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103807
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286770
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Narrow Lane
School category	Community		Halesowen
Age range of pupils	4–11		B62 9NZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818210
Number on roll (school)	403	Fax number	01384 818211
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ian Preston
		Headteacher	Anne Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are White British, with a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. There have been a number of staffing changes in the last two years with four new members of staff including two newly qualified teachers appointed in September 2006.

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 which has made significant improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are appreciative of the school's work saying that Hurst Green is a very caring school that provides many exciting opportunities for children to learn. Good learning starts in the Foundation Stage (Reception) where the provision is good. This firm foundation is built upon effectively, achievement is good, and by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are above average. More able pupils are challenged well. There are notable strengths in pupils' reading, mathematics and science skills. In writing however, pupils are not as competent because they do not have enough planned opportunities to write regularly in different subjects. Even so, the good curriculum fosters positive attitudes towards learning and pupils enjoy the way subjects are linked together to make their work more interesting. The 'India afternoon' was enthusiastically received with pupils saying, 'It was great fun dressing up and finding out about the way different people live.' The good care, guidance and support given to pupils contribute effectively to their personal development and well-being. Pupils know how to keep safe and enjoy lessons and other activities. They behave well. They know the importance of pursuing healthy lifestyles and develop a good understanding of living in a community through the good opportunities given to them to take responsibility and help others. Senior leaders make good use of assessment information to track the progress of pupils and this is shared well with teachers. Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers have high expectations and use questions well in helping pupils to think carefully and to extend their learning. Teaching assistants are effective; they make sure pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who lack fluency in English are fully included in lessons and make good progress. However in a minority of lessons, teachers do not expect enough of pupils. Worksheets are overused and often constrain the rate of learning. The quality of teachers' marking varies and although some is good, that of others is less helpful to pupils trying to reach their targets. These inconsistencies prevent pupils' progress being even better.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Leadership and management are good. Information gained from the thorough monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is used well by them to focus efforts on raising standards. Members of the newly established leadership team, including the literacy and numeracy subject leaders, manage their responsibilities well and are improving their skills of checking and evaluating the work of the school. However, as yet they have not had sufficient time to influence developments in their areas of responsibility and aspects of good practice have not been shared as quickly as they could have been to improve further the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in most subjects.
- Raise some teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do and improve marking so that it shows pupils why their work is good and how it can be improved.

- Ensure that the new leadership team takes greater responsibility for the monitoring of pupils' and teachers' performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start Reception with skills slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the school and by the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average. In 2005, more able pupils did not achieve well enough, but as a result of actions taken this year, more pupils have attained the higher levels in English, mathematics and science than have done so in the past.

Assessment information shows that challenging targets were met and all but very few pupils made the progress expected of them. At least one third of pupils exceeded their targets, achieving particularly well in mathematics.

By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics; in writing, standards are broadly average. In Years 3 to 6 also, writing standards are weaker than other aspects of English. In some classes pupils have too few opportunities to practise their independent writing skills. They do not write regularly enough and sometimes their writing development is constrained by the overuse of worksheets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of effective support. Pupils who lack fluency in English are also supported well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good emphasis placed on personal, social and emotional development in Reception leads to children reaching good standards in this aspect of learning. Throughout the school, pupils' enthusiasm for work and good behaviour contribute effectively to their progress. Good attendance indicates their happiness in school. One pupil reflected the views of many, saying, 'School is fun, and there are loads of kind people here.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils are pleased that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly. However, there is a very small minority of pupils who are not as kind to others as they should be.

Pupils eat healthily and benefit from good opportunities for exercise, such as through the 'skip to be fit' activities. They know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community as they take on roles as councillors, house captains and playground leaders. 'We like helping the little ones, making sure they are safe,' said one pupil. Pupils are developing good personal and collaborative skills, which prepare them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Typically, teaching is well planned and based on good subject knowledge. It creates interest which encourages learning and so pupils make good progress. Expectations are high and teachers use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking. Targeted support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who lack fluency in English are fully included in lessons and make good progress. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not expect enough of pupils and the rate of learning is too slow. The marking of pupils' books, although often good, does not consistently provide pupils with helpful pointers about the good aspects of their work and how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The innovative way in which subjects are linked together through topic work and the creative arts makes learning exciting, interesting and meaningful for pupils. However, the curriculum does not include enough writing in subjects other than in English, and, due to a lack of guidance, opportunities are missed to do this effectively. In Reception the curriculum is good, with a wide range of practical activities to engage children's interest, although work still has to be done to develop good outdoor provision. Personal, social and health education is good and successfully promotes pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles, staying safe and citizenship. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities, including visits, visitors and well attended clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff look after pupils well. Although a small number of parents say there are issues with bullying, discussions with pupils show that the majority are confident that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. In fact one pupil said, 'School is like being at home, it is safe and secure.' Relationships are good. Pupils know there is always an adult who will help them with any worries they might have. Checks to safeguard pupils' health and well-being are securely in place. Teaching assistants and outside agencies provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, ensuring that they are fully included in all the school has to offer. Pupils who lack fluency in English are also supported well. Pupils' academic progress is carefully monitored and pupils are clear about their learning targets. However, not all teachers refer to these targets when marking pupils' work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together as a team and have been instrumental in creating a caring community where every child is valued. The school works closely with parents, local schools and external agencies in order to ensure pupils' well-being. Parents are pleased with the school's work with many saying, 'The school benefits from strong leadership and a committed teaching staff, all of whom seem willing to go that extra mile to support our children's education.'

Good procedures to check and evaluate the school's work are in place. The senior managers respond well to any decline in standards as seen by the improved proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in English, mathematics and science in the 2006 National Curriculum tests. The influence of middle management is underdeveloped. Members of the newly established leadership team, including the literacy and numeracy subject leaders, are starting to develop the skills needed to help them to assess the success of teaching and learning in action. However, as yet they have not had sufficient time to influence developments in their areas of responsibility. Governance is good. Governors are loyal and supportive. They know the school's strengths and are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about what needs further improvement. The school has good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly towards us during our visit to your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you and your teachers about how well you are doing. We think you go to a good school.

- The things that we particularly liked about it are
- You make good progress, achieve well and attain good standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave school.
- The youngest children get a good start to their education in the Reception.
- We agree with you that you have an interesting and exciting curriculum.
- We are pleased that you know how to keep yourself safe and you enjoy lessons and other activities.
- We think you make good food choices at lunchtime showing that you know the importance of eating healthily.
- You have a good headteacher and teaching in the school is good.
- Teaching assistants make sure that those of you who find learning difficult and those who as yet do not speak English fluently, are included well in lessons.
- What we have asked the school to do now
- Help you to do even better at writing by ensuring that you are given more opportunities to practise your writing in all subjects, not just in English.
- Although you achieve well, we think you could do even better if some of your teachers expected more of you and gave you more information about why your work is good and how you could make it even better.
- Although your headteacher and deputy headteacher know what is happening in school we have asked that other teachers can visit classrooms and check how well you are learning, so that things that are working well can be shared with everyone.

We wish you well and hope that you will continue to enjoy learning more and more as you grow up.