

Hawthorn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108460
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	288106
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	143
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andy Roberts
Headteacher	Ms Judy Cowgill
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	Park Close Elswick Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE4 6SB
Telephone number	0191 273 4237
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and is set in an area of very high economic deprivation. Most pupils are from White British families and about 20% are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from a Bangladeshi background. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, so too is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is above average and some of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A higher than average number of children join or leave the school during term time. The school has a base for six pupils with educational and emotional difficulties who transfer in from other schools. When children start school in the Reception class their attainment is very low, especially in language and communication skills. The school has been affected by high staff turnover since the last inspection. Only one teacher has remained in post since then and there have been three headteachers in that time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and there are strengths in pupils' personal development, in the care and support the school provides for pupils and in the links it makes with parents. After a period of high staff turnover and instability since the last inspection, the school has now settled and is benefiting from a new leadership team, stable staffing and support from the local authority.

The school is a happy, friendly place where children feel safe and secure. They learn to be tolerant and caring and welcome new entrants warmly, so they too soon feel to be a part of the school. Pupils are well cared for and supported and have excellent relationships with their teachers. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, work hard and enjoy coming to school. Despite this and the school's best efforts, some pupils have poor attendance and do not benefit from all that the school offers. Pupils relish the opportunities they have to make a contribution to the life of the school. They are also keen to make improvements through the school council and are enterprising in raising funds for playground games. By Year 6 they are mature, considerate and adequately prepared for the challenges of the future.

Although standards in English and mathematics are well below average in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their very low levels of attainment when they start in the Reception class. The exception is in their knowledge of letter sounds and early reading skills which could be better. Girls reach higher standards than boys, though their achievement is similar. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Most teachers plan carefully to provide work that matches pupils' needs and expect them to work hard. The curriculum ensures that pupils make progress year on year and makes good provision for out-of-school clubs and visits. Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory, though there is not a dedicated area for outdoor learning which is a weakness that hampers children's learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving as the school gains a better knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and identifies the correct priorities for improvement. The headteacher has provided very good leadership to stabilise the school, and improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants have supported these improvements well and are fully committed to building on these strong foundations to raise standards in the school. Teaching and learning are improving and in some classes progress is now good.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, including pupils' knowledge of letter sounds in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2.
- Improve teaching and learning so that more is of a good or better quality.
- Provide a dedicated outdoor learning area for Foundation Stage children.
- Improve the attendance of the significant minority of pupils whose learning is affected by too much absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards are well below average. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with English as their second language and those with emotional difficulties. However, because of pupils' very low starting points and the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Those who don't make enough progress usually have very poor attendance.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, but less than half reach the national goals set for children their age by the end of the year. By the end of Year 2, standards were well below the national average in 2006. Similar attainment was seen in Year 2 during the inspection. School data show that these pupils have made satisfactory progress from the start of Year 1, except in their knowledge of letter sounds. This hampers their ability to read and write independently and slows their learning generally. Improvement to this is one of the school's current priorities.

In the national tests in 2006 for Year 6 pupils, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Factors which affected these results were the impact of high teacher turnover and the influx of pupils, some of whom were refugees, during Years 5 and 6. Attainment seen in the current Year 6 was also well below average in English and science, but closer to average in mathematics; pupils are on course to meet the targets set for them in this subject. Again, almost half of the pupils now in Year 6 were not in the school at the start of Year 3. A quarter of Year 6 pupils have joined since the start of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils feel safe and valued in school, and leave behind the worries or concerns of the outside world. They enjoy school and the vast majority attend regularly, though the poor attendance of a significant minority reduces overall figures to below average. Pupils' behaviour is good and often very good, which creates a safe, happy atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are tolerant and considerate, and they welcome new children to their classes so that they quickly integrate and become part of the school. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle, how to stay safe and enjoy taking plenty of exercise.

Pupils willingly accept responsibility and are eager to play a part in running and improving the school. They relish their jobs as monitors, on the school council, and as buddies or games masters. They are rightly proud of the improvements they have made to playtimes through the introduction of toys and games – especially as they raised the funds themselves. Older pupils are mature, sensible and caring towards younger ones and have much to offer the school and their peers. They are adequately prepared for the future with good personal qualities and their ability to get along with each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection and all lessons had some good aspects which increased the rate of learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to overcome the many barriers to pupils' learning. Improvements to teaching mean there are increasing numbers of pupils now making good progress. This is a result of the school's focus on regular assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, and give advice on how to improve. Where teachers make good use of assessment, they have high expectations and set challenging targets for all groups. In some lessons, teachers do not match work accurately to pupils' varying needs. This sometimes leads to pupils given work that is either too hard or too easy for them.

Sometimes teachers spend too long on explanations. This prevents pupils from being involved and they lose interest. Pupils learn best and say they enjoy learning most when they are, 'doing things and finding out for themselves'. Although teachers rightly provide many opportunities for pupils to talk and express their ideas, they do not plan enough opportunities for writing in all subjects, so that pupils' confidence and skills are not developed fast enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The school has worked closely with the local authority to improve the curriculum in literacy and numeracy and there is now a secure framework in place to ensure that learning progresses

through the school. The planning for teaching letter sounds and early reading skills is an area for further development. While the school has developed other subjects well to motivate pupils to learn, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for writing in these so that pupils' skills are not consolidated enough.

A strength of the curriculum is the planning to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties are supported to make good progress so they can rejoin their class to learn alongside their peers. The school's links with the community and other schools, together with a good range of out-of-school clubs, visits and visitors, provide good opportunities for the development of pupils' interests and talents. The school does not have an area dedicated to outdoor learning for the Reception class children. This hampers children's progress in some areas of their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessment are in place. Excellent relationships in the school and with parents ensure that pupils feel safe and cared for. Parents see the school as a source of support and speak very highly of how much the school does to help them with their children's learning, or other concerns. Attendance figures have improved this year because of the school's constant efforts. However, figures are still below average.

The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils' personal development, especially for new arrivals and vulnerable children. Teachers know the pupils and their families very well and this contributes to the strong family and community atmosphere that exists in the school. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory and improving as teachers respond to recent training by the local authority. Some teachers have developed very good practice upon which the school can build. The school has good links with local schools and external agencies to support pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has provided very good leadership for the personal development of pupils and the pastoral ethos of the school. She has been ably supported in this by the senior leadership team. The school has created a secure and stable environment for learning. Pupils' progress is improving and standards are moving closer to expected levels, especially in Year 3. The school has been well supported in this work by the local authority and the teaching skills learned are now embedding among staff who are committed to their role in helping the school to improve. The deputy headteacher has established a good system to track pupils' learning so that the school now knows how successful learning is in each class.

Governors have developed their expertise well since the headteacher joined the school. They have a good knowledge of the school from first hand observations, and give good support and challenge to its work. The school has won the support of parents to its community programmes and is steadily building their knowledge of their children's learning so they can support this at home. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and good improvement to pupils' personal development and the care provided for them. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	4
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

5 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawthorn Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6SB

Thank you for your kindness and help when I visited your school recently. You made me feel very welcome.

It was good to see how much you enjoy lessons, how hard you all work and how well you behave. A lot of your lessons are good. I have asked that your teachers try to make sure you learn well in all your lessons. You are kind and helpful to each other and make children who join your class feel welcome. All of this makes your school a very happy place to be and helps you all to learn. I know your good attitudes make your teachers and your parents very proud. Keep up with these good things and you will help your school to get even better. As a result of my report, you will notice that your teachers give you more writing and mathematics to do in other subjects in the future. This is to help you get better at these subjects by having more practice. Also, children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 will have more chance to practise letter sounds to help with their reading and writing.

You told me that you feel safe in school because your teachers look after you so well. I agree that they do and your parents think so too. You all work hard to make your school better by taking your jobs seriously and looking after the school and each other in the playground or in class as monitors, buddies or games masters. The school council has done very well to get more toys for playtimes and you all make a difference by thinking about what else would make the school better. You really are learning to be good citizens. A few of you need to come to school more often so that your learning doesn't suffer and you don't fall behind your friends. You may notice you get even more encouragement to do this in the future.

I know that your school will continue to improve because you and your teachers work so hard.

Thank you all again and my best wishes to you for the future.

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead Inspector