

Hotwells Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108937
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	288228
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Tom Simpson

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Dennys
Headteacher	Jenny Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2002
School address	Hope Chapel Hill Bristol BS8 4ND
Telephone number	01179 030044
Fax number	01179 030048

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage
- achievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and for girls
- the quality of the curriculum and its impact on standards and the quality of pupils' learning
- the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and its impact on their achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of the school's tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of Ofsted's questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school, serving an urban community. The majority of pupils are from a White British background and only a very small number are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. The main difficulties of these pupils relate to delayed literacy skills. Attainment on entry varies widely but is broadly as expected for children of this age. The school has received the Healthy Schools award and the International Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This highly popular and oversubscribed school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. It has many significant strengths. Good academic standards are maintained through the provision of a broad and exciting curriculum and high quality pastoral care. An unusually large proportion of the parents responded to a questionnaire sent out by inspectors. The vast majority of these are satisfied or very satisfied with the provision the school makes for their children. Typical of the observations written on the questionnaires was the comment, 'Hotwells is an outstanding school which achieves so much across so many different areas – academic, pastoral, creative, citizenship, learning to learn and personal development. We feel very lucky that our children have had such a great primary education.'

A major reason for the school's success is the outstanding level of senior leadership. An inspirational headteacher and other highly effective senior leaders enable staff to perform at their best and to strive for excellence. As well as carrying out their individual responsibilities very effectively senior leaders work exceptionally well together and teamwork among all staff is excellent. This maintains continuity, even through periods of change, and ensures that all staff focus on school development and how they can contribute to developing the school even further. Senior leaders receive excellent support from governors. They are fully involved in monitoring and development work and have developed their role as 'critical friends' very well.

The school is modest about how well it is doing, largely because it is continually striving to become even better. As a result, there is a very strong culture of self-evaluation and there is a very effective range of systems in place to enable the school to judge the quality of its provision and the progress being made by the pupils. The analysis of assessment information is used successfully to identify how well different groups of pupils are performing, such as boys and girls, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Where areas of weakness are identified, swift action is taken to provide changed teaching tactics or extra support to specific individuals or groups of pupils. For example, teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils who have delayed literacy skills. This leads to achievement which is good overall, and sometimes exceptional. The pupils get off to a very good start when they enter the school. They make exceptionally good progress in the Nursery and Reception class. By the time they reach Year 1, they are very well prepared for the rest of their schooling. They continue to make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are significantly above average. The school continues to build well on this during Years 3 to 6 and by the time pupils leave the school standards are significantly above average in all key areas. Standards in science are a particular strength. On the other hand, more able girls are not doing as well as they should in mathematics. The school has introduced a number of strategies to address this issue but these are yet to show impact on results.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They love coming to school and the latest attendance figures are above average. They take great pleasure in being able to contribute to school life and the wider community. Members of the school council, for example, are proud of their role in helping to develop an 'eco-friendly' school and the pupils enjoy contributing to charities such as 'Water Aid' and 'Children in Need'. The pupils are successfully developing an awareness of other cultures too, for example through their links with a school in Uganda and exploring monthly themes such as 'Black History' during school assemblies. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and

confirm that they feel very safe at school. The pupils are reflective but confident learners who have high expectations of themselves while still being respectful of one another's needs. Consequently, they are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives.

One of the specific strengths of the outstanding curriculum is the way in which it is made exciting and meaningful for the pupils. It has a high level of regard for their personal development as well as their academic achievement. It is carefully planned to ensure that different subjects are linked together wherever possible and greatly enriched through extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors. The school's playground area has been developed into a stimulating learning environment and the local community is used very well as a resource for learning. Excellent links with local partners, for activities such as drama workshops, also contribute greatly to the quality of learning activities provided.

Even though several teachers are newly qualified or on temporary contracts, their classroom practice is effective because of the exceptionally high level of mentoring and support that they receive from the whole staff team. Consequently, teaching and learning are good overall, with examples of outstanding teaching throughout the school. The pupils learn at a rapid rate in lessons because teachers provide them with challenging work that is well matched to their individual needs. Skilled teaching assistants make an important contribution to learning, especially for those pupils with additional needs.

Pupils' excellent personal guidance is effectively complemented by very strong academic guidance and target setting, which are very well informed by a rigorous system for assessing and tracking the performance of pupils. Pupils are consistently encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing and thus have an excellent understanding of what they need to do next to improve. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, receive outstanding support, including that gained through excellent links with external agencies such as the school health service. Rigorous procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and ensure safe staff recruitment.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The very well managed provision gives children an excellent start to their education. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children of this age and care for them very well. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes outstanding, and the children make outstanding progress towards all the early learning goals. Relationships at all levels are excellent. The curriculum is enriched and well tailored to the very varied needs of the children. It helps them to develop independence and ensures that they are inspired to learn. A particular strength is the effective use of role play to encourage the development of spoken language. Early literacy skills are also promoted very well. There is an attractive and imaginative outside play area which is used very effectively to promote the children's physical and creative development.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the achievement of academically able girls in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hotwells Primary School, Bristol BS8 4ND

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. I want particularly to thank the members of the school council who gave up part of their lunch break to speak to me. I found that your school is excellent.

- Here are some of the things I found to be particularly good:
- the staff who run the school do an excellent job in making sure you have an outstanding education
- you are exceptionally well cared for by the adults at the school
- your personal development is outstanding; for example, you are exceptionally well behaved
- you make good progress in your work
- Lessons are good and the activities the staff plan for you are excellent, which is why you enjoy school so much.

Here is what I have suggested the school does now:

- ensure that girls in Years 3 to 6 do as well as they can in mathematics. This is important because it is really useful to be good at mathematics throughout life.

Thank you again for your help. Hotwells provides an excellent education and you can all help to keep it that way by continuing to go to school as often as you can and working as hard as possible while you are there.

With best wishes,

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector