

# Heage Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112773
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	289406
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Wickham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Murgatroyd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Heage Belper Derbyshire DE56 2AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 852188
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving families from the village of Heage and the surrounding area. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities. Almost all pupils are of a white British heritage. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. The school has the Artsmark and Activemark. It also has Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

As the school itself accurately assesses, this is a satisfactory school giving satisfactory value for money. The school has made uneven progress since the last inspection. After some initial improvement, standards began to slip back. This is no longer the case and standards are currently average and pupil achievement is satisfactory. The school has met some, but not all, of the challenging targets it sets itself. The school is pursuing the right priorities for improvement. This clarity of direction has led to a sense of common purpose amongst staff. However, there are weaknesses in how the school plans for improvement and in how it monitors teaching and learning. This leads to a patchy picture of improvement and to the capacity to make further improvements being satisfactory rather than good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school is succeeding in reading and mathematics. However, it is less successful in helping higher attaining pupils, in particular boys, do well enough in writing and science. There are strengths in the school's otherwise satisfactory curriculum, particularly in the arts. However, achievement is not helped by the lack of opportunity for pupils to hone their writing skills through subjects such as history and for them to carry out scientific experiments. Although the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good, teaching and learning within it are satisfactory. Provision overall is therefore satisfactory.

Leadership is successful in fostering pupils' personal development, which is good overall. Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown clearly in their positive approach to learning, their good behaviour and their improved attendance, which is now above average. Pupils respond well to special responsibilities, such as organising lunchtime activities for younger pupils or acting as peer-group mentors. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to express their views and opinions and feel comfortable doing so.

The quality of care, support and guidance is satisfactory. There are a good range of ways for giving pupils pastoral support. However, the school is less successful in providing pupils with appropriate academic guidance. The school uses end of year performance data to reveal a picture of overall performance but the tracking system does not make it easy to plot individuals' on-going progress towards end of year targets. Time is wasted reassessing pupils rather than building on previous assessments. Too little use is made of assessment information to help pupils see for themselves how to improve their work or to draw parents into the learning partnership. The exception to this is for pupils with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities. Their needs are identified well and they are given suitable support.

Most parents express confidence in the school but a few are less satisfied. Governors regularly make themselves available to parents and a purposeful attempt has been made to ask for and respond to parents' views. However, this exercise does not form a routine part of school improvement planning.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. As the curriculum has taken on a more practical approach to learning, achievement has improved. However, this is mainly due to the good performance of girls. Boys do not attain as well as girls but overall attainment is satisfactory. Good use is made of end of year assessment to alter the curriculum such as incorporating daily sessions for teaching letters and sounds. This is having a positive

impact on achievement in reading. The school provides a well-tailored curriculum, recently redesigned to appeal to boys. It achieves a good balance of child and teacher led learning and indoor and outdoor learning. The teaching is satisfactory. Regular assessments of children at work help staff see how well children are doing but monitoring is not yet secure enough to ensure that children experience a full range of activities when engaged in 'free choice.' There are times when staff dominate talk and ask questions that do not require pupils to think hard enough. This can lead to some children, and in particular boys, switching off or calling out one word answers during class teaching times.

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

- Improve the achievement of, and the curriculum for, higher attaining pupils, especially boys, in writing and science.
- Improve the quality of improvement plans and, monitor their implementation and the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously
- Simplify and make better use of the pupil tracking system.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupil achievement is satisfactory, so that by the end of Y6 standards are broadly average from an average starting point Children's education gets off to a steady start so that a significant majority of them reach expected levels by the end of Reception. Pupils continue to progress steadily from year to year. In most years, results in the national tests at the end of Y2 and Y6 match the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Provisional results for 2007 show an improved picture from the low mark of the previous year. A concentration on the teaching of reading is paying dividends so that a decline in standards at the end of Y2 has been arrested and an increasing proportion of pupils attain beyond expected standards at the end of Year 6. This in turn is impacting on basic writing skills. However, higher attaining pupils, especially boys, are still capable of achieving more. The school is successful in helping pupils attain beyond expected levels in mathematics but too few pupils achieve beyond expected levels in writing and in science.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well. They are confident and mature in thought and speech. They work well with a partner or as part of a group. Pupils make a positive contribution to school life through the school council and other responsibilities, and to the wider community through charity projects they initiate. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. They know how to eat healthily and that they should drink plenty of water and take exercise. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that if there is any bullying, that the headteacher or other teachers will deal with it effectively. Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have in music and art and know about customs in different cultures to their own. This is indicative of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their satisfactory achievement in basic subjects prepares them soundly for their next stage of education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers establish good relationships with pupils so that classrooms are calm and purposeful places. Planning is clear and lessons proceed with clarity of purpose. Good partnerships with teaching assistants ensure that lower attaining pupils in particular are able to do the work set. A push on using speaking and listening as a spur to learning is meeting with mixed results. There are occasions, as in Year 4, where, having explored moods, thoughts and feelings through drama pupils go on to develop this further in imaginative writing. However, there are occasions when discussion and resultant note-taking have no end product. In addition questioning does not always elicit good enough oral responses. Training on the teaching of writing is beginning to pay off. Recent attempts to help pupils develop particular styles of writing over a series of lessons are showing signs of success. Pupils have growing opportunities in literacy lessons to plan, draft and redraft their work. However, the quality of marking is variable and in general does not give pupils enough feedback on what they need to do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

A thorough programme for pupils' personal development helps pupils make the most of school life. The Artsmark and Activemark reflect a successful emphasis on the arts, music and, in lesson time, on sport. These, with the together with modern foreign languages, add much to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils have access to a satisfactory range of clubs and visits to enrich their learning outside of lessons. Although there are some sporting clubs these are not as extensive as they once were. Pupils talk with relish about the 'hands on' learning they do in subjects such as art. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is similarly engaging. However, some aspects of the curriculum have yet to achieve such acclaim. An over-emphasis on learning scientific facts, which occasionally comprises some mundane copying out of information, does little to foster scientific enquiry. Whilst there are some emerging links made between subjects to foster writing, these are piecemeal. Although it is early in the school year pupils do too little quality writing in subjects outside of literacy.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with government guidance. Health and safety checks are carried out regularly. However, governors have yet to fully resolve all the health and safety challenges the spread-out site presents. An aspect of this was pointed out to governors during the inspection. From talking to a designated teaching assistant to e-mailing their thoughts and feelings, pupils have ready access to pastoral support. Good systems are in place for identifying pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and they receive appropriate support. The 'Nurture Group' is succeeding in helping a small group of young pupils engage with school. Although there are systems in place to track pupils' academic progress, they do not form a streamlined, easy to use package that enables the school to check on progress of individual or groups of pupils or to involve pupils well enough in securing improvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

A prompt analysis of end of year performance data has given the school a detailed and accurate picture of how well it is doing. Close attention, as befitting a school with Investors in People status, is given to staff training. This is linked well to school priorities, as is the purchasing of resources such as those for ICT and reading. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and successfully identifies strengths and weaknesses. Suitable action plans to tackle weaknesses are subsequently written. In the main these are detailed but do not always spell out what difference actions should make to pupils' academic or personal development. There is regular monitoring of teaching and learning but this does not always provide enough guidance on specific improvements needed. Governors are supportive of the school and are beginning to see for themselves how well it is doing. However, their visits are not yet strongly linked to the school improvement plan.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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**

4 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Heage Primary School, School Lane, Heage, Belper, Derbyshire, DE26 2AL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited it recently. I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

We enjoyed our time and could see that it was a happy place. You were able to talk well about your school and express your thoughts confidently. Many of you told us how much you like school, in particular lessons like art music and PE. We could see that you behave well in the classroom and in the playground.

We noticed that some changes to the way the school teaches you to read and to write were beginning to work well. However, there were some things that we and the headteacher and staff think the school could do better.

We have asked the school to make sure it gives you more opportunities to carry out experiments in science. We have also asked the school to make sure that it gives you interesting writing tasks to do in subjects such as history. You can help in this by continuing to do your best in these lessons. We have also asked the school to help you see for yourself about how to improve your work and to make sure your parents know about this. You can help with this by thinking about what you do well and what you could do even better.

Lastly, we have asked the school to think carefully about how to make important improvements work well for you. In particular, we have asked the school to make sure teachers and the headteacher pop into each other's classes to look more closely at what is going on. We have asked them to think carefully about how they use tests and other assessments to keep an eye on your progress.

Thank you once again, and all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Brennan

Lead Inspector