

Highampton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113177
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289535
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Julie Carr

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	
School	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Gilling
Headteacher	Jill Bevis
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2001
School address	Highampton Beaworthy EX21 5LE
Telephone number	01409 231339
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This much smaller than average school serves the villages of Sheepwash and Highampton. There are two classes in this school. All pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. The school has a high intake of vulnerable pupils. A significant number of pupils of all ages join or leave the school at different times

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, in which the devotion of the staff and whole school community ensures there is a happy and harmonious atmosphere. Good leadership and management place the needs of all pupils, regardless of age or ability, at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. There is a strong focus, particularly in Years 3 to 6, on enabling pupils to reach above average standards. Good teaching and good care, guidance and support enable pupils to achieve well academically and contribute significantly to their good personal development. Children start school with broadly average skills and knowledge. They make good progress in their Reception Year, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is not as rapid, but is nevertheless satisfactory. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to review what they have learnt at the end of each lesson or to understand what their next steps of learning should be. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Pupils make good progress as they move further through the school and standards are above average by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. A good curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' good progress. In the Foundation Stage, there is plenty of opportunity for children to learn through play. These opportunities extend into Years 1 and 2. The school shows flexibility in the way it organises its timetable and is creative in meeting the needs of different age groups, such as organising 'focused learning sessions' for pupils in Year 6. Pupils enjoy their school and greatly appreciate the help provided by the many different adults who support their learning. The great majority of pupils behave extremely well and show good attitudes to their work. Although a small minority of vulnerable pupils do have challenging behaviour, the school does everything possible to manage this. They do this very well indeed. Pupils contribute well to the wider community, such as by raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves. With their good literacy and numeracy skills, and their ability to use their information and communication technology skills extensively, pupils are well prepared for the future world of work. With the good support of the governors, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to secure substantial improvements in the accommodation, a key area for improvement from the last inspection. This is without doubt helping to raise standards, for example, by having a new library area and thus promoting independent research skills. The governors and headteacher have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve, but the school's strategic plan does not contain clear enough targets for reading, writing and mathematics for each year group. This makes it difficult for governors to hold the school to account for the progress pupils are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to review their learning at the end of each lesson and to understand what their next steps of learning are.
- Ensure that the school's improvement plan includes clear targets for each year group for reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils achieve well, and standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils make good progress in their Reception Year and in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Most children reach the goals

expected for their age by the time they start Year 1, and a few pupils exceed them, especially in their personal development. In most years since the last inspection, results in reading, writing and mathematics have been below the national average at the end of Year 2. Standards have improved this year because pupils have had more opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects, but standards are not as high as in other year groups. Since the last inspection, test results for Year 6 have almost always been above average. In 2006, results were above average in science and mathematics and below average for English. This year, standards have improved once again in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and vulnerable children make the same good progress as their classmates and, in a few cases, they make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. Transition arrangements between the school and adjacent pre-school get children off to a confident start in the Foundation Stage. This confidence grows as pupils move through the school and they are well prepared for their next school by the end of Year 6. Pupils care about and share responsibility for each other, attend well and enjoy their learning. The vast majority of pupils behave well, are friendly, generous in heart and well mannered. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through the many responsibilities which they undertake, such as taking lunch orders and phoning these through to the local kitchen. An 'issues group', led and run by pupils, is a forum for involvement in the day-to-day running of the school, which influences decisions made on a range of matters, such as playground markings and lunchtime arrangements. Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on issues beyond their immediate locality and to consider global concerns. Pupils put their good understanding of healthy diet and regular exercise into practice. The oldest pupils enjoy running a healthy tuck shop.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In both classes, the teaching is lively, creative and well planned to suit the needs of all pupils. An exciting lesson for Year 6, for example, involved oral storytelling of an adapted traditional tale where pupils performed confidently and with panache. Pupils learn well through lots of purposeful talking to aid writing and thinking, practical activities and exciting contexts for raising standards in literacy. A good example is the holding of a 'film premiere' of the multimedia Red Riding Hood extravaganza, led by children from the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. There is also some outstanding teaching. In an art lesson for the younger pupils, the teacher engaged the pupils by her strong subject knowledge and her high expectations of what the pupils could achieve. As a consequence, pupils made excellent progress when making models of planets out of clay. Pupils are developing skills so they can assess their own work. However, in Years 1 and 2, not enough time is built into the teaching sessions for pupils to review what they have learnt at the end of the lesson or for them to discover what steps they need to take in order to improve their learning. This hinders their progress. The school's involvement in training teachers means that teaching and learning are under constant scrutiny. This is making a difference to the quality of learning opportunities, particularly in the use of information and communication technology.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff meet the varied needs of each pupil in the mixed-age classes well because planning is thorough and there is flexible use of teachers and specialist teachers. In art and design, for example, pupils make outstanding progress and reach exceptionally high standards because of specialist teaching. The curriculum is varied and vibrant. Good links are made across different subject areas so pupils have lots of opportunities to use their basic skills. This is one of the reasons why standards have improved this year in Years 1 and 2. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties as well as those with specific talents and gifts is good. There is a strong commitment by the school to ensure the needs of vulnerable pupils are met through careful crafting of the curriculum with an emphasis on emotional and social aspects of learning. This has helped them all to do well and some of these pupils to make outstanding progress. Many older pupils participate in and enjoy a good range of activities outside lessons, such as netball, computer club and mathematics 'booster' sessions. Residential visits for all ages, including camping overnight on the school field for the youngest children, contribute substantially to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's family atmosphere, coupled with the staff's concern for each individual, means that pupils feel safe and valued. One pupil voiced the opinion of many when he said, 'We always have someone to chat to, some of us are buddies and so we help each other.' Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning needs, and good external links with outside agencies ensure the school intervenes effectively to help those pupils with the greatest needs. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection. The staff provide good academic guidance for pupils and set them challenging targets which motivate them to learn. Most older pupils know what they need to do to improve. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not always entirely clear how to improve their work or what their next steps of learning should be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good direction and a very clear vision for the school. She is ably supported by the teacher for Years 1 and 2. The school knows itself well, although it has been modest in some of its judgements about its own performance. The evaluation of how well pupils are doing and the factors affecting their progress is effective for the older pupils, but is not sharp enough for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Governance is good because governors give both practical and strategic support. The committee structure enables governors to scrutinise spending decisions with rigour. They visit classes regularly. These actions all have a positive impact on raising standards for pupils. The substantial improvements to the school's accommodation and the recent improvement in pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 indicate that there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	2
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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I was impressed with your friendliness and good manners. You told me that your school is a good school. I agree. The staff care for you and teach you well, and they provide good and interesting activities which help you to learn. Here are the special things I found out about your school: Your headteacher and teachers are always trying to make your school as good as possible. Your school is like a family so you all look after each other and care about each other. All of you enjoy your learning, especially art; you are all very good artists and your clay work is the best I have ever seen in a school. Most of you behave very well. By the time you leave your school, you have made good progress with your learning and your work is of a good standard. So that you can do even better, I have asked your teachers to help you to reflect at the end of each lesson on what you have learnt and to understand what you need to do next to improve your learning. I would also like them to help those of you in Class 1 to try especially hard to get better with your reading, writing and mathematics. I have also asked the teachers to make sure that the governors know what your learning targets are so they can check each term how well you are doing. This will help you to make good progress and reach your targets. Keep up the hard work and keep enjoying your learning. I wish you every success for the future