



Little Hallingbury C of E (VA) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115182
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290158
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Missin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wright's Green Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Little Hallingbury, Little Hallingbury
Age range of pupils	5–11		Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01279 723382
Number on roll (school)	140	Fax number	01279 721286
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Lynn Petts
		Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Coates
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	30–31 January 2007	290158

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is smaller than most primary schools and year groups in the school are small. Most children benefit from pre-school educational provision and attainment on admission is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Almost all pupils have White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English. At the time of the inspection, a re-building programme was being undertaken which necessitated a significant alteration to normal school routines, particularly in the Reception/Year 1 class.

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 with several outstanding features. Parents recognise its strengths. One wrote, 'This school delivers such a lot. Our children are being given an excellent start to school life.' Care, guidance and support are good and lead to good personal development. As a result, this is a happy and vibrant place where pupils do well. Their enjoyment of school and their appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles are excellent. One pupil said that they liked school 'because it was like being part of a big family'. Pupils help to create a welcoming school community through the outstanding opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as members of class and school councils and as play leaders. A further strength is the outstanding breadth of the curriculum. All pupils are given the opportunity to develop their understanding and skills in a very wide range of contexts. Their basic skills are very well developed with additional enhancements including French, music tuition, swimming, a very wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs and whole school dramatic performances. These contribute to pupils' enjoyment and their commitment to their learning.

Good teaching ensures that pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. Good teaching and provision in the Reception Year encourage good progress, especially in children's personal development and communication skills, although standards overall are still broadly average by the beginning of Year 1. A relative weakness is that while good activities are provided for the younger children in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class, they are not always made sufficiently clear in planning. The school is rightly undertaking a review of the Foundation Stage provision. Effective teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to standards which are above average in Year 2. Standards by Year 6 are usually above average. In the current Year 6 they are closer to average and not as high as those in 2006. However, this represents good achievement considering the very high proportion of the year group who have joined the school in recent years, and the high percentage who need extra help with their learning. The good progress is secured because teachers accurately assess pupils' needs and provide well targeted support. Assessment procedures are good and this data is used to set learning targets for pupils. However, they are not yet sufficiently clear about their own targets and how they will help them to improve the quality of their work.

Good leadership and management mean that the school has robust self-evaluation processes and an accurate view of its effectiveness. The school is not complacent and continually seeks for further improvement. An example of this has been the school's targeting of mathematics as an area for improvement and the rise in standards which has been subsequently achieved. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of the presentation of pupils' work. The school development plan is clearly centred on raising standards and is at the heart of the school's work. This work has been effective despite recent changes in senior staff. Governors support and challenge the school well. The school has good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are more aware of their learning targets and what they should do to improve the quality of their work.
- Review and revise the Foundation Stage policy and provision within the mixed Reception/Year 1 class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are, on balance, above average and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The standards of children beginning the Reception class are broadly in line with the county average but often with less well developed language and personal skills. Most settle quickly to school routines and make good progress although standards are still broadly average by the end of the year. A strength is the way in which basic skills and learning practices are established which underpin the good progress which pupils continue to make as they get older. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and standards are above average in Year 2. Evidence from the very good quality displays of pupils' work indicates that pupils attain high standards in non-tested subjects such as art and design and technology. Pupils with learning difficulties also achieve well and make good progress towards their own learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' very good behaviour and their sensible and mature attitudes are evidence of the fact that they enjoy coming to school and are appreciative of all that it offers. One said, 'I feel lost if I can't come to school.' Attendance is good. Pupils feel safe and they confirm that bullying and racism are rare. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding and their spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils are very clear about right and wrong and treat each other with kindness and sensitivity. Pupils' social skills are extremely well developed and older pupils show increasing maturity as they take on responsibility as class and school councillors or as play leaders at breaktime. Pupils make a very positive contribution to both the school and local community. The school promotes healthy lifestyles very well and pupils have good understanding of how important this is. Pupils appreciate their healthy lunches and the many chances to take part in physical exercise in a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils' good basic skills and their ability to work well together are preparing them well for the future world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their learning because the quality of teaching is good. Teachers typically make clear reference to the learning intended in the lesson and devise activities which challenge pupils of all abilities in the class. Pupils are encouraged to talk to each other, to rehearse arguments and to reinforce their understanding. This encourages high standards in speaking and listening and also improves the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers and their assistants support pupils with learning difficulties well so that they also make good progress. The teaching of children in the Reception/Year 1 class is good. All the adults work effectively to settle children quickly and to track carefully the progress they are making.

A good amount of assessment data is collected and is used to track the progress which pupils are making and underpins the school's drive to raise standards. The school has recently changed its approach to target setting. As a result pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets and what they must do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. Provision ensures that basic literacy, numeracy, science and computer skills are addressed but offers a wide range of other activities including French, swimming, a school band and many different sports clubs. The impressive display of cups, certificates and awards won by the school is evidence of its successes and also of the wide variety of opportunities provided. A further strength is the imaginative development of the attractive outside environment to provide an outdoor auditorium and classroom. These are well used, particularly during the summer months. Pupils report how much they enjoy lessons because what they do is fun and they have lots of different things to do. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good basis on which pupils' further progress is based. Very good links are made with other schools, such as the mathematics enrichment class supported by the local secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and supports pupils well. As a result they feel safe and they have great confidence in the care available, should they feel distressed or in need. All the adults in the school community know the pupils well. Procedures for ensuring their health and safety and the well-being of all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable or may be at risk, are good. Good account is taken of the possible risks associated with all activities, particularly the many times pupils go off-site. The statutory requirements relating to appointing staff are being met. Assessment

procedures are good. Pupils are set class and group learning targets though these still lack impact.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's energy and vision are important reasons for the school's success. She has worked hard and successfully to secure the confidence of parents. One wrote, 'The headteacher takes a very personal interest in the well-being of every child and goes out of her way to ensure that every child is happy and performing to their potential.' The school's work is clearly centred on raising standards and this is the main priority of the all-embracing school improvement plan. The headteacher has effectively secured the staff's full involvement in this and as a result all are committed to the development of the school. Senior staff are effective and their contribution to the evaluation of the school's work helps to provide an accurate overall view of its effectiveness. The analysis of assessment data has helped the school to identify ways to improve pupils' performance, especially in mathematics. Governors' regular visits to school and their careful oversight of its work ensure that they work effectively as critical friends.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	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?	1
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

31 January 2007

Dear Children,

Little Hallingbury CE VA Primary School, Wright's Green Road, Little Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM22 7RE

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school recently. Thank you for making me feel welcome. I particularly noticed the fun which some younger children had in performing their plays in the outside classroom.

Here are the things that I think are best about your school:

- The school provides a very wide range of interesting things for you to do.
- You are all very aware of the importance of being healthy.
- You achieve well in lots of different ways. The presentation of your work is now much better than it was at the time of the last inspection.
- The school provides you with a lot of ways for older pupils to take responsibility in the school.

These are the things that I think could be better:

- You are not yet clear enough about your own learning targets and what you need to do to get better.
- The school is going to look carefully at how the work of the youngest children in the Reception/Year 1 class is organised.

I wish you well for the future.

Paul Missin

Lead inspector