

Hythe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115916
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290366
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Goddard
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Fyfe
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	School Road Hythe Southampton SO45 6BL
Telephone number	02380 843206
Fax number	02380 849660

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils live in a mix of owner-occupied and housing authority homes. Approximately a quarter of pupils live in the local area, with the majority travelling from other parts of Hythe and district. Pupil turnover has been higher than average in recent years. Almost all pupils have White British heritage. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average overall, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards.

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 outstanding features. It has the overwhelming support of parents and they are delighted with the dramatic improvements made in recent years. Pivotal to the school's success is the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy. Indeed, all teachers with a leadership responsibility make an exemplary contribution. The quality of teaching is good and often outstanding, illustrating the part played by all staff in meeting the school's aim to 'promote high quality learning and attainment in an environment where individuals are valued'.

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and pupils achieve well through the school. Standards are average and improving due to the high quality teaching. Pupils' personal development and well-being are also much improved and are now outstanding. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They frequently reflect on their own progress, helped by clear guidelines on what they need to do to improve. At the time of the last inspection, one in five parents were concerned about behaviour. It is now generally excellent and pupils' positive attitudes are also evident from their substantial contribution to the life of the school. However, although attendance rates are above average, some pupils frequently arrive late, which means they miss the beginning of lessons. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe, avoid hazards and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The mature approach of the oldest pupils, together with their secure basic skills, means they are well prepared for subsequent education and life beyond school.

The curriculum is rich and diverse. Teachers have worked hard to provide a programme which links subjects effectively and stimulates pupils' curiosity. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has considerably improved recently and computer work is being integrated in some subjects. The school is aware that ICT needs to be used more extensively in mathematics and science; for example to measure changes in temperature with computer sensors. Participation rates in the wide range of extra-curricular activities are high. Full advantage is taken of the spacious and flexible accommodation to vary the way pupils are grouped. A strength of the curriculum is the way it is planned to meet pupils' wide ranging needs. This is evident in lessons, and in the individual and small group work led by the highly effective support staff. Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously to identify any potential gaps in their learning. Such attention to detail is indicative of the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit considerably from this attention to detail.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' skills in using ICT to investigate mathematical relationships and to increase the accuracy of measurements in science investigations.
- Encourage pupils to arrive at school on time so that they do not miss the beginning of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress in every year group. In many lessons, pupils make excellent progress, thanks to the quality of teaching and learning. Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes, making particularly good progress in personal development, literacy and numeracy. Children are on course to reach standards above those generally expected.

Pupils in the current Year 2 did not start from such a secure base but, because of consistently effective teaching, they are progressing well and reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards are average. However, as well as making good progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, the school's exemplary tracking information, validated by the inspection, shows that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also building well on their prior attainment, meeting or exceeding the challenging targets set for them. There was dip in the Year 6 test results last year when a few pupils did not perform as well as anticipated, particularly in English. Current pupils are on track to do much better. For example, pupils read very well and many write with considerable elegance and flair. Pupils' numeracy skills are also good and about half are reaching the higher levels in science. Pupils are making good headway in art and design, music, and history due to good teaching and the stimulating curriculum.

The school's success in supporting pupils with a variety of needs is reflected in the good progress made by those with learning difficulties and disabilities. More able pupils also do well because teachers ensure that they are set work which challenges them and extends their knowledge and understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary, and they are proud of their school. Pupils have a strong sense of their local community and an admirable concern for those less fortunate than themselves. Their excellent response in assembly and in circle time indicates a strong spiritual awareness.

Pupils enjoy lessons and the wide range of clubs and visits that make a significant contribution to their social development. Members of the school council fulfil their responsibilities very well and pupils respond enthusiastically to the healthy competition afforded by the house system. Attendance is good, although some pupils, frequently the most vulnerable, arrive late. This means that they find it difficult to settle and concentrate.

Pupils know what is meant by a healthy lifestyle and participation rates in physical activities are high. They have a good understanding of water and road safety. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. They cooperate well in groups, often taking responsibility for their own learning. By Year 6, they feel confident about moving to secondary school because they know that they have the skills that they will need.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, lessons are underpinned by excellent relationships and teachers have considerable expertise in motivating pupils to do their best. The level of challenge is high and lessons move along briskly, at the same time allowing time for pupils to discuss ideas together and work independently. Teachers make the success criteria clear for each task, often reminding pupils of them partway through a lesson. In this way, pupils know what they need to do to improve. This is further emphasised in the high quality feedback teachers provide during lessons and in their very helpful comments in pupils' books. A continuous dialogue with teachers helps

pupils to develop mature attitudes to work and this contributes to the good and often exceptionally good progress being made in every class.

Teachers are competent in teaching basic computer skills but are less confident in extending pupils' use of ICT; for example in using sensors to record changes in temperature, light and sound.

The school welcomes pupils from other schools who are not so enthusiastic about learning and find it difficult to concentrate. A striking feature of the teaching is the consummate skill with which teachers nurture and motivate such pupils and enable them to take a full part in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. Its richness and variety combined with high quality teaching, means pupils find learning fun and highly motivating. The impact of this stimulating approach is seen in the attractive displays around the school, where there are excellent examples of high quality writing, art work and three-dimensional models. Very good links are being made between subjects, which make the work interesting and enjoyable. When studying portraits of Elizabeth I in art, for example, pupils learn how useful paintings can be in providing evidence to support understanding of history. The integration of ICT is almost complete. It is used well to support many subjects but its use in mathematics and science is not fully embedded. This minor weakness does not detract for the overall picture of a curriculum which is extremely well planned to promote pupils' academic and personal development.

Extra curricular clubs, from drama to all types of sporting activities, are very well attended. The curriculum is enriched by trips, residential visits and visitors to the school and by special events. Pupils enjoy these activities and they contribute much to the development of their self-esteem and self confidence. Music is a strength of the school; some pupils take instrumental lessons, others take part in the band and choir, and there are frequent musical productions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are cared for and supported extremely well. Monitoring procedures are very thorough and particularly good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school goes the extra mile for pupils when necessary, drawing on the support of outside agencies as appropriate.

Health and safety routines, risk assessments and child protection procedures are very well established. Supervision around the school is first class and pupils enjoy lots of well organised playground of activities.

Most pupils reach their targets because the quality of guidance provided through marking and assessment is outstanding. Pupils are helped to understand how they learn and to know what they might do to improve. Comprehensive reports provide useful information for parents and carers, and the well-designed website offers a wealth of detail about school activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership of the headteacher is exceptional. Standards have risen because, through her vision and dynamism, she has drawn together an excellent team of teachers who constantly seek ways to improve their practice through reflection and evaluation. She works closely with the excellent deputy, whose input has been invaluable in ensuring that structures which have been introduced are rigorously implemented. The Local Authority considers the systems which have been initiated to be so good that they are to be disseminated to other schools as an exemplar of excellence.

Management at all levels is highly effective. This is evident, for example, from the rise in standards since 2002. Attainment in mathematics was well below average, with only half the pupils reaching average levels whereas, in 2006, results matched the national picture. Over the same period, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in science moved from below average to 100 per cent. Subject managers and phase leaders are well motivated and provide excellent role models for colleagues. The impact of high quality leadership and management is evident from the vast improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes since the last inspection, the overall increase in achievement since then and in the enhanced curriculum. For example, pupils' writing has greatly improved due to new strategies promoted by the leadership team. Weaknesses in physical education have been successfully addressed due to effective collaboration with the local sports partnership.

School self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and accurately identifies areas for development as well as celebrating the success of initiatives. Governors make a significant contribution to the strategic development of the school, whilst providing appropriate challenge and support. An excellent capacity to improve is evident from the way weaknesses from the past have been successfully addressed. The last inspection found that the school was in an excellent position to move forward. The school has indeed fulfilled this expectation by moving from strength to strength.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	3
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 behaviour of learners	1
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	2
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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

14 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Hythe Primary School, School Road, Hythe, Southampton, SO45 6BL

Thank you for making our visit so enjoyable. We agree with you that Hythe Primary is a good school; indeed, we found that it has many outstanding features. We were very pleased to see how successfully your teachers help you to learn and make good progress. We saw many examples of outstanding teaching. In fact one of the inspectors said, 'I wish I was in that class!' after visiting a lesson. We saw that your work is getting better and better, particularly in writing. This is because teachers have worked hard to find different ways to help you. It is clear from the range of high quality writing we saw that their efforts are bearing fruit.

We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school. You were a credit to the school and your parents. It was good to see how you help out and get on so well with one another.

Many of you take advantage of the after-school clubs and these, together with the trips, musical productions and sporting activities contribute to the exciting time you have at school. All this doesn't happen by accident of course, and we are sure that you appreciate the outstanding way the headteacher and staff make every effort to ensure that you do as well as you can and benefit from all the school provides.

Most children will have seen how much the buildings have improved recently and you do your bit to ensure everything is kept in good order. Your colourful displays add much to the attractiveness of the surroundings. You are certainly enjoying the new computer suite and we have suggested that, now you are confident in using ICT you could use these skills more widely in mathematics and science.

Given that you enjoy school so much, it was surprising to see that some children arrive late for school. The nearby level crossing sometimes holds you up but we understand that this is not always to blame. If you are regularly late you can miss some vital learning, so try and make sure you always arrive on time.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector