



Halterworth Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116032
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290402
Inspection date 26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Halterworth Lane
School category	Community		Romsey
Age range of pupils	4-11		SO51 9AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01794512028
Number on roll (school)	422	Fax number	01794511740
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Slade
		Headteacher	Mrs Jo Cottrell
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This popular school is larger than most other primary schools. Approximately half of its intake is from outside the school's catchment area, and reflects the mixed social and economic background of its pupils. Few of them come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is well below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is below average as is the proportion of pupils in need of a statement of special educational need. In the last two years the school has appointed a new headteacher. It has a number of national awards including the Sport England Active Mark and the Geography Silver Mark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides pupils with an outstanding standard of education. Parents correctly recognise this, commenting on the extremely high quality of pupils' personal development, care and academic achievement. Leadership is inspirational. As one parent wrote, 'Its leadership team are enthusiastic and forward thinking; the children are forever at the centre of their planning and ideas'.

Working very effectively as a team, the inspirational headteacher and her deputy have placed a heavy emphasis on developing teachers' professional knowledge. This enables staff to be innovative and highly evaluative of their work. This approach has had a real impact both on the curriculum and on teaching styles. This, together with consistently good, often outstanding teaching, helps ensure that pupils achieve extremely well and attain standards that are outstanding by the end of Year 6. Pupils enter Reception with skills and knowledge that in some areas are above average but overall match expectations for their age. Over the year they make very good progress with most pupils achieving and often exceeding their early learning goals. Pupils' progress is also the result of some very positive pupil attitudes and outstanding behaviour.

The leadership team have an extremely good understanding of the school, partly as a result of the very strong commitment to identifying and taking notice of the views of parents and pupils. 'My views were valued and respected', wrote one parent. This approach also contributes significantly to the pupils' outstanding personal development. In particular, there are extremely good and numerous opportunities provided for pupils to get involved in relevant decision making about school life. Pupils have had an impressive input through the 'Action Teams' in developing the school environment, writing the regular newsletter, and contributing to the design and content of the school brochure. The school cares very well for its pupils and in this safe environment they make outstanding progress both academically and personally. Pupils are increasingly enabled to become independent learners and are using targets to self-assess. These are not yet reinforced consistently in all lessons.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. A very clear vision has been effectively shared with pupils, parents, governors and school staff. The development of the school has included a commitment to high quality learning experiences for pupils. These are delivered by an outstanding curriculum which both motivates and challenges: pupils talk of learning being fun. Governors and parents are very willing supporters of the school, and contribute extremely well to school development. Governors' involvement in their own self-evaluation mirrors the commitment of the school to ensuring that there is no complacency, and that adults and pupils share the aim of learning and developing together. There is an outstanding capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' targets are more consistently reinforced within lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupil achievement is outstanding. They enter Year 1 with above average levels of skills and knowledge. A consistently high quality of teaching, together with positive pupil attitudes helps ensure that in the Year 6 national tests pupils attain results that are well above average. This has been the case for several years. Standards in English and science are well above average whilst pupils' performance in mathematics is particularly strong. The school successfully develops the more able and they gain significantly better results than pupils in other schools nationally. In its consistent commitment to improvement the school identified some shortcomings in boy's writing. Consequently measures have been introduced which are already having an impact. A wider choice of texts is resulting in boys speaking enthusiastically about 'hobbits', and 'Gandalf' and using an increased range of vocabulary in their writing. In Reception there is a successful emphasis on the quality rather than quantity in writing.

The school tracks the progress of pupils methodically. This results in the early identification of pupils requiring additional support and the design of some very well focused intervention work conducted by teaching assistants. Consequently pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make extremely good progress towards their personal goals, and in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

One parent wrote, 'My daughter loves school. The school is interested in, and promotes the development of the whole child, giving value to academic, non-academic and social issues'. The school successfully uses a range of strategies which contribute to the outstanding nature of pupils' personal development and well-being. An extremely strong element is how the school involves pupils in decision-making. In numerous 'Action Teams' the pupils organise events, and learn effectively about working alongside adults. For example, they re-design the school brochure and visit the printers as part of their research. Such experiences, along with the raising of financial awareness, make for an outstanding contribution to the community and preparation for future life. This is in addition to other very impressive contributions such as orchestra concerts, writing the school's newsletter and community singing at Christmas.

Pupils run their own tuck shop and know well about how to stay healthy, but the school acknowledges the need for further reinforcement of these messages. Pupils know in great detail about how to stay safe, and this is reinforced by pupils' participating in a 'Junior Citizenship' day and opportunities for 'first aid' training. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. These are very pleasant, well-mannered pupils who are at ease when talking to adults. Behaviour is excellent. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is consistently good, and is often outstanding. The newly qualified teachers, along with others, benefit well from effective monitoring and feedback. This contributes to the maintenance of high quality teaching throughout the school, including in Reception. It is a mark of the school's commitment to self-evaluation that its monitoring of teaching is validated by visitors, including local headteachers.

Teachers are increasingly using some very effective assessment and tracking procedures to help plan their lessons. Very secure subject knowledge contributes to detailed planning and lessons that meet the needs of pupils' different learning styles. As pupils said, lessons are 'fun' and challenging. A particular strength is that teachers are prepared to experiment: there is a growing emphasis on active teaching, and interactive white boards are used very well. Teachers are increasingly handing more responsibility to pupils for their own learning, although the school recognises that there is more to do in this area.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The quality of standards and achievement reflect the fact that it meets the academic and pastoral needs of all pupils, from Reception onwards. Crucially, the curriculum successfully combines enjoyment with challenge, and an emphasis on research and thinking skills. Teachers plan together and this leads to some very good practical links being made between subjects which helps to make learning more relevant for pupils. Their investigative and problem-solving skills are well challenged, for example, in the 'Tudor Week' project. This week also involved pupils in map-work, a scientific experiment, artwork, writing a story as well as working out the wages of a ship's crew. It also took the opportunity to emphasise photographic skills. Additionally pupils applied in writing for a job on-board ship. Pupils also benefit from other very good opportunities, such as learning French, coaching by football specialists, participating in 'living history days', playing music and making their own choices of activities in Reception.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. However the degree to which the school cares for the pupils is excellent. As one parent wrote, 'I believe the school ethos shines through in all aspects of school life: children are very happy and confident learners'. Adults know the pupils extremely well and through very regular contact, their parents as well. It is an outward-looking school and consequently a very wide range of external support agencies are used to effectively support pupils. Moreover, within the school,

pupils also benefit from an impressive commitment to professional development that helps ensure that adults are kept abreast of current ideas and practices. The Foundation Stage Leader provides adult workshops on positive parenting. Teaching assistants regularly meet to review pupils' learning, but also benefit from additional training about using different strategies to care and support pupils. Some very good links with other schools help to smooth the move from nursery and into secondary school. In particular pupils benefit very well from lessons conducted by specialist secondary teachers.

Child protection and health and safety procedures are rigorous. Pupils have targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy but there is a degree of inconsistency to the extent to which they are reinforced in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The recently appointed headteacher, together with her effective deputy, place a great emphasis on identifying, and acting upon the views of all interested persons. This is a strength of the school. The views of parents, pupils, governors and others are obtained on a very wide range of issues. Together with some effective monitoring this results in the leadership having a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and what areas need improving. Governors have carried out their own performance review, developing an action plan which reflects the school's outstandingly rigorous approach to self-evaluation and development planning.

The aim has been to distribute leadership responsibility and the new structure has already had a positive effect. For example, there are now team leaders in place who have responsibility for Reception and Year 1; as well as Years 2, 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6. This is ensuring the smoother transfer of pupils, and more continuity and progression in their performance. In the interest of pupils as well as adults there is a commendable emphasis on professional development. 'Enquiry teams' have been established to allow staff to work alongside each other, to act as 'critical friends' and to develop and review new ideas. Senior leaders have been trained to observe teaching, whilst subject co-ordinators draw up action plans and effectively oversee the curriculum.

One parent wrote, summing up the views of many, 'In my view the school has gone from strength to strength'. This reflects the outstanding impact of leadership and management, including governors, on the success of the school.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	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?	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?	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

You will remember my recent visit to your school. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and the welcome that you gave me. You respect and listen to others, and I listened carefully to what you told me. I agree with you that your school is outstanding.

This means that it does many things very, very well. You realised this when you told me that you felt very well cared for, that lessons are good, and teachers make learning 'fun'. I was also impressed by the way in which you are involved in making decisions about school life. This prepares you so very well for the future, as well as allowing you to get to know and work alongside adults.

The speed at which you learn in English, mathematics and science is faster than most other pupils, and your results are well above what is normally expected. Well done and keep up the hard work!

One of the reasons you learn so well is the very good way in which the school is led. This results, for example, in what you learn being so varied and fun. The 'Tudor Week' for example, provided different activities which appealed to all pupils in that class. As a result all pupils were able to enjoy their learning and make good progress.

You will probably know that your school sees learning as a challenge for all, including the adults. Teachers, teaching assistants and your headteacher continue to learn new things so that things can be further improved for you, the pupils. One thing I have asked the school to look at is the way you are reminded in lessons about your targets and how to use them to improve your work. You can help your teachers by telling them when you find the work too easy - they will listen carefully to you, because the way that the school does this is a very strong part of its approach to your learning.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead inspector