

Hartsbourne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117300
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	290791
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie McRae
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Hartsbourne Road Bushey Hertfordshire WD23 1SJ
Telephone number	0208 9506853
Fax number	0208 9508140

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection focused on:

- how the school is seeking to improve achievement in writing, particularly of more able pupils
- the effectiveness of support for pupils with learning difficulties and those who learn English as an additional language
- the effectiveness of marking and the use of targets.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized school. Almost a quarter of its pupils are from families of various nationalities whose parents are in the armed forces. Approximately 40% of families are Jewish. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds whose home language is not English varies but is currently above average. The proportion of pupils needing additional learning support is average but rising and five pupils have statements of special educational need.

The school has gained Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Staff and governors are accurate in their judgement that Hartsbourne Primary is a good school. The school's excellent quality of care, support and guidance and the focus on promoting their personal qualities help to provide a stable environment for all pupils. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding and contribute to the sense of purpose evident throughout the whole school. Pupils say they feel safe and have an adult to turn to if they are worried about anything, because their individual circumstances and needs are recognised. Pupils settle in quickly, enjoy looking after newly arrived children and develop lasting friendships. The school promotes diversity in many ways. As a result, there is a harmonious atmosphere where pupils of many different backgrounds work and play well alongside each other. Pupils know the expectations of their behaviour because all adults show how they should respond to each other. Pupils are caring and aware of the need to think about and respect others.

The school has achieved 'Healthy Schools' status in recognition of its success in helping pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The strong focus on healthy eating means that pupils understand the important contribution that diet makes to their future well-being. Pupils have the opportunity for plenty of vigorous exercise including much enjoyed activities organised through a local secondary school. Pupils are proud of their contribution to the school through their council and the recently formed 'ECO committee'. They enjoy acting as 'buddies' for newcomers and support their friends when they are unhappy about something. The school has forged strong links with service families through the Children's Education Advisory Service, and Year 6 pupils successfully organise annual fund-raising for the Royal British Legion.

Pupils are eager to learn. They work hard and attend very regularly. One reason for the pupils' enjoyment is their exposure to a wide range of interesting experiences. Special weeks, visits, visitors and links between different subjects are used to bring learning to life. As one parent said: 'There are all sorts of opportunities for my son to get involved in exciting activities during and after school. The balance between learning and fun is spot on!' Themed activities such as 'Science Week' and 'Feeling Good Week' help to make learning come alive. The school's strong focus on developing the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, linked as it is to good teaching, ensures pupils make good progress. It has improved the achievement of the more able pupils in writing, and an increased number of pupils are now above the standard expected for their age because of work undertaken to extend their skills as far as possible. Virtually all reach, and many exceed, national expectations in all areas at the ages of seven and eleven. Standards have improved since the last inspection and, by the time they leave Year 6, the vast majority of pupils are equipped for the next stage in their education.

Effective systems are in place to assess pupils, track their progress towards challenging targets and identify those causing concern. The school has become skilled at the accurate diagnosis of the difficulties experienced by pupils who may find learning hard. Successful intervention programmes then help them to catch up. All staff are aware of the needs of individuals, particularly those learning English as an additional language or those who need extra support for their learning, and work well together and with other agencies to provide effective support which helps them make the same good progress as other pupils. Targets are used well to challenge all pupils and teachers have a good picture of how well pupils are doing. However, marking is not used consistently to give pupils clear guidance of how to improve.

All teachers and other adults work tirelessly for the success of the pupils. Pupils make good progress because teachers plan lessons carefully to address their identified needs, engage pupils well in lessons through their questioning and use resources and new technology to make learning more interesting. As one pupil said, 'Teachers make lessons fun and interactive'. Amongst these strong features is one weaker aspect; there is no effective identification of pupils who are gifted and talented nor programmes to extend their learning, which is a potential restriction of the development of such pupils whenever they join the school.

Parents are generally delighted with the school, but a significant minority feels that the school does not seek their views or take sufficient account of their concerns. The school is aware of this and strives to maintain regular communications. In spite of some recent teacher changes, the headteacher has an effective team of staff and governors around her, all of whom are contributing to moving the school forward. Under her astute leadership and that of the newly appointed deputy, there is a sharp focus on improving teaching and developing the leadership role of others. Procedures to improve how everyone does their job are thorough and help to give a clear picture of the school's qualities and plans for future developments. Through this good leadership and management, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class. Their personal development is deemed by teachers to be of paramount importance from the moment they arrive. Sensitive induction arrangements and close relationships with parents help children to settle quickly. In spite of some changes in the team, all adults combine well to match activities to the children's current stage of development, although the more able children are not always challenged sufficiently by some tasks. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Well-established routines mean that children quickly become independent and develop good attitudes to learning. They are keen to take part in independent and adult-led activities and show good levels of concentration. Effective use is made of both the indoor and outdoor spaces, and activities are well planned to meet the children's needs. Children join Reception with a range of skills and abilities that are generally as expected for their age and they make good progress. By the end of Reception, most children reach, and many exceed, the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. They are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use marking more effectively to help pupils see clearly the next steps to take in their learning.
- Introduce systems to identify pupils who are gifted and talented and provide programmes to broaden and extend their learning.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hartsbourne Primary School, Bushey, WD23 1SJ

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were very kind and helpful and showed how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

The youngest of you have a good start in Reception. You make good progress during your time at school. Nearly all of you reach the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school, and many of you do better than this. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work hard and behave sensibly. Your teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities to help you learn. All members of staff help to make sure you are safe and cared for. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities very seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school. I was impressed by the care you show for each other and the way you support newcomers to the school, particularly in helping them learn English.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school better. I think that there are things that can be even better so I have asked your teachers to:

- Use marking more effectively to help you understand the next steps to take in your learning.
- Identify how they can broaden and extend the learning of those of you who are gifted and talented.

You can play your part in this by continuing to attend regularly and trying hard to do your best. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector