

Hallbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120105
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	291629
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Thain
Headteacher	Marita Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002
School address	1 Hallbrook Road Broughton Astley Leicester LE9 6WX
Telephone number	01455 285693
Fax number	01455 285732

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school takes pupils from the village and its surrounding rural area. Pupils represent a wide range of ethnic heritages though most are of White British background. A few pupils do not speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than in other schools.

Since the last inspection, the school has faced many disruptions to the staffing arrangements including a number of long-term absences.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils enjoy school and their personal development is good. A friendly, caring environment helps them feel happy and secure at school, form good relationships and trust the adults who work with them. Pupils are confident young learners and this, together with their sound academic progress, prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

Children start school with knowledge and skills that are generally typical for their age, although their literacy skills are somewhat less secure. Through well organised activities and good support for individuals, children gain confidence, enjoy learning and progress well. At the end of the Reception Year most reach, and a good number exceed, the expected levels in all the areas of learning. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, with writing being the weakest. In Year 6 pupils are working at broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, but here science is the weakness. While the overall curriculum is satisfactory, opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of investigation in science are limited. Teaching and learning are satisfactory resulting in pupils' satisfactory achievement, but the level of challenge, especially of the more able pupils, is not high enough. This unnecessarily limits what they can achieve. Good support helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve well. Additional activities and experiences enhance learning well. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Care arrangements are good and parents are confident that if problems arise then these are dealt with promptly. However, the academic targets that pupils have do not consistently challenge them enough and they do not receive sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a period of considerable turmoil in the staffing which led to a serious decline in standards, the improvements the headteacher and key managers have made to raise standards are starting to have some effect. Through improved teaching and more careful checking of pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2, the decline in standards here has been arrested. This level of close scrutiny of pupils' progress and quality of teaching is not yet evident in Years 3 to 6 where more able pupils are still not being challenged enough. Not all middle managers check closely enough on how provision could be improved in their subjects and no one has specific responsibility for managing science. Governors are very supportive and manage finances well but their involvement in checking the school's performance is limited. The school judges itself as satisfactory and this is accurate. In light of the improvements thus far and a good understanding of what still needs to be done, managers have the capacity to improve the school further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by challenging pupils more, especially the more able pupils.
- Ensure that governors and middle managers check the work of the school and its performance more rigorously, particularly with regard to pupils' progress, so as to be able to set more ambitious targets where necessary and ensure they are met.
- Improve provision, secure achievement and raise standards further in science.
- Make sure pupils understand how they can improve their work and achieve more. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Reception class, good provision, including detailed assessments and an exciting range of resources, helps children make rapid gains in their learning particularly in their literacy skills. They leave the Reception Year having reached the levels expected and a good number exceed them.

Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and overall standards are broadly average. In the national assessments in 2006, pupils in Year 2 reached standards that were below the national average in reading and mathematics and exceptionally low in writing. Standards have improved this year through better teaching and additional support for specific groups. In these same tests, pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards in English and broadly average standards in mathematics and science. With more support for targeted groups, Year 6 pupils are now working at similar levels although science is less secure. Strategies to improve writing are helping more pupils achieve at the higher levels but insufficient challenge through investigations in science and to a lesser extent mathematics, limit pupils' higher attainment. As a result of good support, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to learning English achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good attendance reflects their positive attitudes to school and learning. Pupils feel valued and in turn show respect and care towards others. Behaviour is good. They play together well, with older pupils helping younger ones play safely in the playground. Assemblies and environmental projects promote their good awareness of the beauty of the natural world. Visits to places of worship, celebrating festivals such as Diwali and working with many visitors help pupils appreciate the cultural diversity of the world around them and they participate in many local art and music events. Through residential visits and other social events they learn how to work with others successfully.

School council members are involved in decision making, particularly with regard to how they can help around the school, for example the road safety officers take their leadership roles very seriously. Pupils understand well that eating fruit and taking regular exercise through the many sports clubs on offer help them to stay fit and healthy. They know the dangers of drugs and who to go to should they feel threatened or bullied. Visits and many visitors introduce pupils to life and work beyond the school. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education because they make satisfactory progress in their basic academic skills and have a lively interest in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage lessons well and pupils enjoy learning. Good use is made of teaching assistants to help pupils participate fully in lessons. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting those who need individual help. Children in the Reception class benefit from well organised activities that help them learn by exploring new situations independently. This good practice is evident in a few classes in Years 1 to 6, and in these lessons the levels of excitement

run high as pupils take initiative and follow their own lines of enquiry. Relationships are good and pupils are often encouraged to discuss things with each other. They are particularly enthusiastic when teachers use the interactive whiteboards because the visual displays help pupils understand information more clearly. However, a few teachers, particularly in the mixed age classes, do not match work well enough to everyone's needs. Expectations are not high enough, especially of the more able pupils. This lack of challenge hinders them from making better progress. In addition pupils have insufficient opportunities for practical activities, such as investigations in science, where they can work more independently, ask more questions and apply previous knowledge to new situations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

With improvements in the outdoor area and better resources, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is now good and is the basis of children's good achievement. In Years 1 to 6 themes incorporating all the areas of learning are being planned to help pupils build successfully on previous work, but this development is at an early stage. Facilities to promote pupils' computer skills are now good and pupils enjoy working on individual projects. The 'Big Writing' project is effectively addressing the weaknesses in pupils' writing skills. Standards are improving and the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is diminishing. However practical investigations, in science for example, are still hampered by inadequate space in some classrooms and by timetable arrangements that limit pupils' opportunities to practise these skills regularly. Effective intervention programmes help lower attaining pupils make good progress, but more able pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils who are new to learning English receive good individual support. A good personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' personal development well. Many additional activities including trips and sports clubs enrich learning well. Good links with the local community help pupils learn about life beyond the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils learn how to live healthy lives and stay safe. Procedures for child protection, health and safety, reporting of racial incidents and safeguarding pupils are all secure. Pupils trust the adults that work with them and know they can ask for help if problems arise. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress towards their targets because their needs are identified early and effective action is taken to help them achieve well. External agencies are contacted where appropriate.

Pupils' progress is being checked more closely now and where it is used well to inform target setting, for example in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6, pupils are making good progress. However, not all teachers use the assessment data effectively enough to set targets that challenge pupils. The practice of target setting is inconsistent and does not take account of what pupils can already do, and more able pupils fail to achieve all that they could. The school demonstrates good practice in advising pupils through marking, but again, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked patiently to regain stability in staffing and develop a team that is focused on raising standards. The recruitment of new staff has resulted in improved teaching and hence the decline in standards in Years 1 and 2 has been arrested. Staff changes continue to be a problem in Years 3 and 4 but good teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures pupils leave the school satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are proud of their school. Parents are very satisfied with the school, although a few express concerns about too many staff changes. Subject leadership is emerging but procedures to check the quality of teaching, analyse assessment data, track pupils' progress and set challenging targets all lack rigour. Consequently pupils, particularly the more able, do not achieve all that they could. Provision for science has not improved enough to secure pupils' satisfactory achievement and raise standards. Governors carry out their duties satisfactorily but are not involved enough in monitoring the school's performance. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall performance has not been adequate to set and meet sufficiently ambitious targets. Nevertheless, most issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Pupils now have good access to computers, provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and standards are improving. The capacity of the school to make necessary improvements is satisfactory.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

11 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hallbrook Primary School, Broughton Astley LE9 6WX

I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school when we visited recently to look at your work and talk to you and your teachers. It was lovely meeting such friendly and polite young people; you made us feel very welcome. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their opinions of the school. It was brilliant to see so many of them at the assembly on Friday. I think they enjoyed your cheerful singing as much as you did and they certainly learnt a great deal about recycling waste materials.

- The school on the whole is satisfactory but some things are good and some need improving:
- You try your best and get the results we expect from children of your age. Your results are improving but we think some of you could do even better.
- The work you do in all the subjects is satisfactory but more investigation work in science would be good. The many clubs and visitors help you learn.
- The school takes good care of you and your teachers listen to you and help you if you have problems.
- You behave well, look after each other and know how to stay fit and healthy.
- We were particularly impressed by how much you know about looking after the environment and what you are doing to make sure everyone does their bit.
- These are the four things we have asked your teachers and governors to do to improve your school:
 - They should set you harder work so that you learn even more in your lessons.
 - They should make work in science even more interesting with more investigations.
 - They should check what happens in the lessons in all the subjects to make sure that targets are challenging and that things are improving.
 - They should give you more advice about how you can improve your work.

There are things you could do to help too, for example you could make sure you understand what you have to do to get better results.

We are pleased that you are happy at school and have good friends; we hope that you continue to enjoy school and make progress.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector