

# Higham-on-the-Hill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120133
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	291642
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	52
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Price
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Higham-on-the-Hill Nuneaton CV13 6AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01455 212294
<b>Fax number</b>	01455 212294

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Higham on the Hill CE Primary School is a very small primary school serving the village community of Higham on the Hill and the surrounding area. A small number of children come from a nearby Missionary Training Centre. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is variable but overall, children's attainment when they begin school is broadly that expected for their age. The small number of pupils in each class means that judgements about standards are largely valid only in relation to individual pupils, not year groups. The position is further complicated because each class contains pupils drawn from two or more age groups.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Higham on the Hill School is at the heart of village life and serves the community well in supporting local events, and provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Everything that it does is built on a strong ethos, resulting in pupils who attend regularly and who develop sound personal skills. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is catered for satisfactorily. This is underpinned by suitable procedures for their care, guidance and support.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is the curriculum, where a range of clubs, visits and visitors successfully extend pupils' experiences. Teachers' expectations are mostly appropriate, with the work pitched at the right level and building on what the pupils know and can do. In these cases, teachers know what they want the children to learn and make it clear to them. As a result, the pupils are motivated, try hard, and make sound progress in developing the skills needed for the next stage of their education. However, in some instances, the teaching does not build well enough on what the pupils already know because teachers do not use assessment information routinely to plan carefully enough for the next small steps in pupils' learning. Importantly, they do not always take sufficient account of individual learning needs, especially for those pupils who are more able, as the work is not always sufficiently challenging. As a result, the pace of learning is sometimes slow for these children. Marking does not always explain how pupils can improve their work and it does not refer to their targets.

Pupils make a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to help the children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. Pupils make only satisfactory progress in other areas of learning because there are occasions when they could be challenged more. Most are working at the levels expected for their age when they start in Year 1.

Most pupils including those in the Foundation Stage are working at levels close to or slightly above those expected for their ages. Consequently, pupils achieve satisfactorily from their individual starting points.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with good features. The headteacher ensures that the school continues to provide a satisfactory standard of education despite long-term staff absence and difficulties in filling vacant teaching posts. Despite the school's best efforts, the staffing situation remains partly unresolved and is preventing better learning. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and provide good levels of support tempered with a well-defined degree of challenge through its well-focused visits to school. Because of the rigour of the school's self-evaluation, the governors and the headteacher are well placed to give a clear direction to the work of the school. The school's self-evaluation is refreshingly honest and accurate. The school has successfully dealt with the areas for improvement identified in the previous report and has good capacity to continue to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers always provide pupils with suitably challenging work, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the use of the information produced by assessment to ensure pupils know how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Results in the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2006, with a greater number of pupils taking the test than in previous years, show that pupils attained well above average standards and made satisfactory progress from their individual starting points in the Foundation Stage. Pupils reached particularly high standards in writing as a result of careful teaching of basic skills. The pupils currently in Key Stage 1 correctly spell a number of common words and use their understanding of sounds and letter patterns to make logical assumptions about the spelling of unknown words. Pupils usually remember to use basic punctuation.

Standards and achievement of the current pupils in Year 6 show that the more able pupils use vocabulary well and structure their ideas effectively in a small range of writing styles. They know how sentences are constructed to influence and persuade the reader to read on, and are able to use more complex forms of punctuation to good effect. Despite attainment in Key Stage 2 English being stronger than in mathematics and science last year, standards in writing are lower than those in reading. Pupils make slower progress in this area because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and for sustained periods. Overall results for the three pupils who took the end of Key Stage 2 tests were slightly above average. Even though teaching is satisfactory, teachers' expectations of standards, including presentation, are not always high enough and this holds back progress, especially of the highest-attaining pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Students' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is satisfactory. Assemblies play an important role in this, especially through the celebration of success. Pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory overall. They are good when tasks are challenging and capture pupils' interests. Pupils make a positive contribution to their community in many ways through fundraising events and performances at the local church. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council. This prepares them well for the future. School council members are enthusiastic and take their role seriously; they are pleased with their increasing involvement in the work of the school and are looking forward to setting up some after-school clubs. Pupils have a sound understanding of what keeps them fit and healthy. Most pupils choose to eat and drink healthily during breaks.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there are notable inconsistencies. Planning does not take into account the results of assessment, which that means work is not well enough matched for pupils of different abilities, and this inhibits pupils' learning.

The pace of working during some lessons is too leisurely and this further lessens the challenge for the more able pupils. Expectations are too low in some classes, with pupils not stimulated by work which they find easy to complete. Strengths in teaching are the very positive relationships that staff have with the children and their effective use of regular praise and encouragement to motivate them. There are some good examples of target setting and analytical

marking, but these are inconsistent across the school. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is good; here, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Work is well planned, with clear success criteria and pupils actively engaged in assessing their own work. Consequently, pupils make good progress in this subject.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now good because it is well planned to ensure that all pupils learn a wide range of skills. The school has adapted the curriculum, enabling the pupils to develop and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through other subjects. Although this is still in the early stages of development, pupils have noticed a change and say how much they enjoy learning through topics. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is satisfactory. It covers all six areas of learning and gives pupils a secure start to their life in the school.

A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities run throughout the school year. These include recorder and choir clubs run by parent volunteers that are well attended. Pupils experience some other cultures through the arts and humanities but this range is too narrow. The school has correctly identified the need to increase pupils' awareness by introducing pupils to a broader range of cultures so that they are better prepared for life in the society they will experience in later life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils receive a satisfactory level of care, guidance and support. This helps them to grow in confidence and develop caring attitudes. Pupils feel safe because staff encourage them to talk about any problems that they may have. The overwhelming majority of parents agree with the pupils. One parent said, 'I feel the teachers all make themselves available to talk about any concerns'. Although the progress that pupils make is tracked by staff, this information is not always well used to plan work that will help all pupils reach their challenging targets. Some pupils are aware of their learning targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by teachers, support staff and outside agencies. This helps them to make satisfactory progress. Child protection, safeguarding and health and safety procedures are robust and clear.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the headteacher is effective; she is quietly determined and provides a clear direction for all staff to follow. Actions taken by the school to improve monitoring and evaluation and provision for ICT have been well chosen and carefully planned, resulting in good provision in this area. There are now effective procedures for checking on the quality of the school's work.

Most parents speak well of the school; nonetheless, the inspection took note of a small number of strongly expressed parental concerns about behaviour and staffing difficulties, and balanced these against what the pupils thought and what inspectors observed during their visit. The

school is well aware that it has many more improvements to make, including regaining the trust of some parents.

The school is resolute in its efforts to raise standards and in promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. Nevertheless, progress has not been as rapid as it could be, due to staffing changes which have caused workload issues and uncertainty within in the senior leadership team.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	3
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	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly towards us during our recent visit to your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you and your teachers about how well you are doing. We thought you would like to know what we have said about your school. Overall, we decided it is a satisfactory school.

You usually behave well and you are kind and considerate to each other. In lessons, we think you listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and you try hard to do your best. It was good to see that some of you are involved in school life. Some of you take on extra responsibilities such as the school council. We were interested to hear about your plans for the future. We were pleased to see how well you play together at playtime, especially in your very small playground.

We have made some suggestions to make your school get even better. Your teachers should make more regular checks to see that you are learning as much as you can and use this information to plan harder work for you. By the end of Year 6, many of you do quite well in the tests but we have suggested to your teachers that some of you could do even better, especially in your writing. We have asked the teachers to help you write better stories, poems and reports through more exciting opportunities. When you have completed a piece of work, we would like your teachers to write in your books how you could make it even better.

Many things are improving in your school and you, together with your teachers, can make it even better. Please keep working hard and doing the best you can. We wish you well in the future.