



Hassell Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124110
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292891
Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007
Reporting inspector David Biltcliffe

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Barracks Road
School category	Community		Newcastle
Age range of pupils	4–11		ST5 1LF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 297500
Number on roll (school)	287	Fax number	01782 297505
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Kim Smalley
		Headteacher	David Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007	Inspection number 292891
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than the typical primary school. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is similar to that of most children nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils in the school with learning difficulties is slightly below average. Five pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hassell Primary is a good school with some very good features. It gives its pupils a good all-round education. It is an improving school that has made solid progress since its last inspection in 2002. It is effective in what it does largely because of good leadership and teaching.

By the time pupils leave the school, their standard of work is above average. Since they start in Reception at a level that is close to average, this rate of progress represents a good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Higher ability pupils generally make good progress, but are not always stretched enough, particularly in scientific investigations and in some of their writing. Children make good progress in Reception.

The main factors in pupils' rate of progress are the quality of teaching and the school's very good climate for learning. Pupils try hard, learn responsibly and want to succeed. They are pleasant, polite and well behaved. Attendance is very high. The majority of pupils eat and exercise sensibly. They feel safe. They gain significant experience of taking responsibility and are prepared well for their future lives. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children. As several said, 'We are impressed by its excellent qualities.'

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, interesting, very orderly and well paced. The curriculum is broad, with particular strengths in extra-curricular activities that significantly extend pupils' experiences. Pupils are well cared for, sensitively supported and encouraged to do well. A small amount of teaching is undemanding, with the result that pupils, especially the more able, do not always have to think hard enough or cover sufficient ground.

The school is in good hands. Its leadership and management are committed, sensitive and effective. Management has an accurate idea of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve its few weaker spots. Standards of attainment and achievement are being sustained at a good level. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection, even though more remains to be done to meet fully the needs of higher-ability pupils. Not all safeguarding checks, however, are up to date.

The school exceeded the reasonable targets it set itself in the 2006 national tests, but its targets for the current year are not quite challenging enough. An ethos of hard work and enjoyment in learning is very well established. Governors' monitoring and support are thorough. The school gives good value for money. Its good quality in all aspects of its work is an outstanding feature.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of higher ability are always adequately challenged in lessons and that high enough targets are set.
- Ensure that a greater proportion of pupils reach high standards in investigational work in science.

- Keep up to date the formal checks that are necessary to safeguard pupils' welfare.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in Reception with standards that are close to those nationally expected and leave the school at an above average level. This represents good progress and achievement by most pupils during their time in school.

Children make good progress in Reception. By the end of Year 2, the overall standard in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Although slightly fewer pupils reached a high level in these aspects in 2006 than did so in the previous year, the overall standard reached in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 represents a good achievement.

Pupils continue to make good progress during Years 3 to 6, reaching an above average standard by the time they leave school. English and mathematics are particular strengths. In 2006, for example, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in these subjects was almost double the national figure. The picture in science is not quite up to the same standard and is an aspect for further improvement.

Although achievement remained sound over the 2003 to 2005 period, the slight decline recorded during that time has been effectively reversed. Occasionally, more able pupils do not achieve quite as well as others, because the questions and written work they receive do not always extend their thinking enough. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, owing to the well targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils enjoy school and work diligently. Attendance and punctuality are very good, another key factor in pupils' good achievement.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They readily take on responsibility. For example, the Year 6 playleaders are, rightly, proud of the support they give to younger pupils. Pupils exercise a significant, positive influence on school life through the school council.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives, because they achieve well in basic skills and acquire a thorough understanding of how to work constructively in groups. Year 6 pupils, for example, organise fund-raising for an annual party for senior citizens. Pupils eat healthily and stay safe, partly as a result of the extensive work they do in personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons, work hard and learn well, because staff teach interesting, carefully structured lessons. Teachers create a positive atmosphere that encourages pupils to have a go and persevere. As one girl said, 'I found this difficult, but I like to try my best.' Pupils also work very well independently, because teachers give them many opportunities to do so and have high expectations of attitudes and behaviour.

Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities but, in a few lessons, more able pupils are not stretched enough. Behaviour is well managed and pupils are keen to learn. Teaching assistants are used effectively.

In the best lessons, teachers use questions very effectively to ensure that pupils think through their ideas carefully and give developed, more precise answers. Occasionally, however, they focus more on the tasks in hand than on what pupils are actually learning, so lessening pupils' achievement. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, usually telling them how to improve. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets pupils' needs well. The school puts an appropriate emphasis on literacy and mathematics. Each subject is carefully planned and the curriculum is well balanced, despite the lack of a central record of the time spent on each subject.

Pupils are well taught about healthy living and the dangers of drugs. They work effectively with one another on joint projects and older pupils acquire a good foundation in business skills. They also benefit from learning French and German through the close links established with a local secondary school. Children in Reception achieve well, because activities are well planned. Pupils enhance their personal development well through a wide range of enrichment activities. Challenges to extend the highest ability pupils are beginning to be developed through good links with other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works hard and successfully to enhance pupils' development and to keep them safe and healthy. It measures individual pupils' progress carefully and provides them with clear goals for learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

The school successfully promotes pupils' physical and emotional development and their personal safety. Pupils say they cannot recall any incidences of bullying or other

oppressive behaviour, but feel confident that any such occurrences would be quickly dealt with. The school secures very good behaviour, partly through a well understood system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils with behavioural and social difficulties receive good support.

The greater range of stimulating equipment in the playground is one example of solid improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils say they now enjoy playtimes and feel safe. Suitable child protection procedures and systems for reducing potential hazards are in place, although the school has not centralised its records that show that all statutory personnel checks have been carried out. The school's measures to ensure pupils' safety in the restricted playground, though onerous, are thoughtfully planned.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's clear vision, determination and wise guidance have raised pupils' achievement to a good level through a concerted focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. He is well supported by senior managers who share his commitment and contribute significantly to improving the school.

The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, because it has developed a thorough system of self-evaluation. Teachers receive regular feedback on how they can improve further and share best practice widely. Governors, senior managers and subject leaders closely monitor how well the school is doing. The school's success in improving achievement in 2006 shows that it has a good capacity to improve.

The school's strategic plan is well constructed. Although the setting of overall school targets is not always challenging enough, there is an effective system for tracking pupils' progress. The school helps pupils with learning difficulties to achieve well. A weakness that the school has already identified is that more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should.

Governors are well informed about the school through the links they have with individual subjects. They ask searching questions and hold the school appropriately to account. Finance is well managed to ensure good value for money. Staff are deployed carefully to make the best use of their expertise. The school has extensive partnerships with other institutions and agencies that make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress and personal development. This is a good school that is well poised for still further improvement.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	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?	2
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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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?	No
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

As you know, inspectors recently visited your school to see how well it is doing. We should like to thank you all very much for telling us what you think and making us welcome.

Overall, we think that Hassell Primary is a good school.

We found many good things, of which you and your parents can be proud.

- Standards by Year 6 are above average. You do particularly well in English and mathematics.
- You make good progress in lessons and achieve well.
- This is because you work hard and are taught well.
- You are pleasant and polite, and behave very well.
- Your attendance and punctuality are very good. You enjoy coming to school.
- Your teachers look after you carefully and sensitively.
- Your school is very well run.
- You are well prepared for your future lives.

There are also just a few things that need to be better. Please do all you can to make your school a still better place.

- Occasionally, you do not have to think quickly or deeply enough in lessons.
- The most able amongst you could do still better, especially in science.
- Some important information about the school's work needs to be better recorded.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.