

Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124232
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292927
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Knight

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Bladen-Hovell
Headteacher	Malcolm Morrey
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Eccleshall Road Loggerheads Market Drayton TF9 4NU
Telephone number	01630 672287
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves the villages of Loggerheads and Ashley and the surrounding area near the border of Staffordshire and Shropshire. A nursery class was added in September 2006. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. Relatively few pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. On entry to the school, children have the expected levels of skills and knowledge.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I find the teachers at Hugo Meynell very kind and helpful. They always put the children first in everything.' This parent's comment was typical of the views of many about this good school. Pupils' personal development is good as they thrive in the school's strong ethos of mutual respect founded on its close links with the Church. Parents and pupils alike spoke warmly of the approachability of the staff. Pupils feel that they are absolutely safe and secure in the school. They say that their teachers really care for them, a reflection of the excellent pastoral care in the school. Pupils are confident that staff will effectively deal with any problems they might have. They said the headteacher is very supportive of their ideas, for example, when they developed their fund raising ideas and suggested to him that they might produce a 'Meynell Mag'. The way the school encourages pupils to initiate such activities and carry them through to a successful conclusion is a key factor in their excellent preparation for future economic well-being.

Good leadership from the headteacher and a reorganisation of the school's management structure ensures that they all share the school's vision of excellence. He has delegated more responsibility to teams of teachers whilst remaining approachable to both staff and pupils. Staff teams are empowered to make changes for the better and rigorous self-evaluation ensures that these are effective. As a result, progress across the school is improving as expectations rise and teachers become ever more conscious of the level of challenge pupils can cope with. Teaching is good but there is some variation in quality across the school. In most classes, tasks are set that challenge individuals effectively and are supplemented by good questioning techniques. Consequently, standards have risen to above average levels and pupils achieve well. However, there are occasions when the most capable are not challenged enough and the pace of learning is not as brisk. Progress is enhanced through the ingenious use of subjects such as history and geography, being used as platforms for extended writing. In so doing, the school effectively addressed an area for development. A particularly strong feature of the good curriculum is the way that links are forged between subjects, helping pupils to see how skills learned in one area can be used to good effect in another.

Pupils across the school receive good academic guidance as part of the excellent care, guidance and support the school provides. Pupils understand their targets and current levels of attainment and say that marking is helpful in telling them how well they are doing and how to improve. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress. The school identified that progress in creative development was not as brisk as in other areas. Changes made have ensured this is improving. The large outdoor area is used well to promote children's physical development, although it is not routinely used as effectively to promote other areas of learning.

Rigorous monitoring procedures and tracking of pupils' progress ensure that the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. This forms the cornerstone of development planning. Whilst governors are knowledgeable and challenging, and monitor the progress of school development, they are not currently involved in determining the priorities to be addressed early enough. Nevertheless, the improving trend in the school and the clarity of vision as to the next steps indicate good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the extensive data from monitoring and evaluation of the school's work to share good practice and ensure that the quality of teaching in all classes matches the best in the school.
- Ensure that the outdoor area is used to its fullest extent to support all aspects of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, pupils make good progress, reach standards that are above average and achieve well. Focused teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children quickly gain the skills they need, although creative development still lags slightly behind the other areas. At all stages in the school, standards are rising steadily. In Key Stage 1, the school noted that progress seemed to be slower than in the rest of the school and concluded that the transition from single age Reception classes into classes containing a mixture of pupils in Years 1 and 2 was too sudden for a number of pupils. A 'transition class' for pupils in Year 1 was set up to ease this change and early indications are that they have settled more quickly and are making improved progress. Appropriate actions have also been taken to effectively address the relatively slower progress in reading and writing than in mathematics, although the level of challenge for the most capable is not yet consistently high. Progress in Key Stage 2 is similarly good, especially in Year 6. The school's own targets for its future performance are set rigorously and the school's tracking data suggest it is on track to meet them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' good personal development. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their good attendance. They speak enthusiastically about the staff and their lessons. Behaviour is good. Pupils usually work solidly, with or without adult supervision, in an atmosphere of happy industry. However, occasionally pupils can become restless, for example, when listening in assembly or when tasks are not challenging enough. Pupils have a thorough understanding of safe practices and healthy eating. Indeed, pupils spoken to could scarcely believe that others might not eat healthily! Pupils say that the headteacher listens willingly to their ideas, and gave some examples of ideas that had come to fruition, including fund raising for charities and the production of a school magazine. Pupils organised all aspects of these activities. The school council has a real voice because it thoroughly canvasses opinion in the school. This year, it is organising sports day with an amended list of events following just such a consultation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching across the school is the cornerstone of pupils' good and improving achievement. A clear focus on raising teachers' expectations, based on the school's detailed assessment and tracking, has led to lessons in which tasks are rigorously matched to all pupils' needs, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, challenging them well beyond their comfort zone. Questioning is used skilfully to ensure that all pupils are included and to develop the

skills of thinking in depth about problems. The links made between subjects ensure that pupils see that skills learned under one banner are equally applicable to another. Teaching assistants effectively support groups in lessons. However, in a few lessons, the tasks are not challenging enough, especially for the most capable, and on occasions teachers do not give all groups of pupils the attention they need. When this happens, pupils become restless and learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school realised that some areas of relative weakness came about because of the way the curriculum was organised and took effective action. As a result, the curriculum is now good. It is planned around skills that can be transferred between subjects in order to improve the quality of learning and make better use of the time available. This has already had a positive effect on improving pupils' writing skills. Early indications are that the creation of a class to help younger pupils cope with the change in emphasis from Reception to Year 1 is also having a positive effect. However, the school agrees that, whilst children in the Foundation Stage have good access to activities that promote their physical development in their extensive outdoor area, it is not used effectively enough to support learning in all the other areas. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by a wide variety of extra activities, visitors and visits. An outcome is the quality of dramatic and musical performance seen in the school. All pupils in Year 6 benefit from a residential visit each year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's Christian foundation is a significant factor in the excellent pastoral care that pupils receive. Pupils and parents agree that staff cherish and nurture children so that they have the best chance to take advantage of all the school offers. One parent spoke for many when rightly saying, 'Hugo Meynell is an extremely happy school. My children love school – always have.' Another accurately added, 'The level of commitment to children's well-being is extremely high.' Although attendance is significantly above the national figure, the school still tirelessly promotes better attendance and takes a robust approach to requests for holidays during term time. Procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' continuing safety are secure. The good tracking system has been adjusted to better suit the pupils in this school and to raise expectations of all concerned. It is beginning to be used to set targets for individuals to aspire to. Pupils enjoy being able to 'tick off' these as they are achieved, becoming used to assessing their own progress and having a clear understanding of how well they are doing and the next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although a number of new procedures are still bedding in, the improvements in outcomes over the last couple of years indicate that the reorganisation of the way the school works is having a positive effect. This has involved a renewed focus on learning, backed up by rigorous and thorough tracking, monitoring and evaluation. Staff are organised into teams that take effective action to improve the quality of learning. This has led to a renewed vibrancy across the school and ongoing dialogue about the quality of pupils' experiences. Much of this vision stems from the headteacher, but it is subscribed to by all in the school, including the governing body. It is

also reflected in strategic planning that identifies appropriate priorities to move the school forward, now and in the future. Some governors, including the knowledgeable chair, play an active part in evaluating the school's performance. The governing body as a whole ensures that its information comes from a variety of sources and challenges the school robustly. However, it is also aware that its role in setting the strategic direction of the school is not fully developed.

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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?	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	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	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 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	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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School, Loggerheads, TF9 4NU

Thank you very much for being so helpful and polite when I visited your school. I really enjoyed seeing you at work in your classes. A special thank you is due to those of you who spent some time speaking to me during the day and telling me what you thought about the school. I am writing to tell you what I found out.

You and your parents told me that the school is good and I agree! You are all learning well because your teachers are getting better all the time at making sure that the work you do is just right for you and setting targets for you. The way subjects are taught is changing so that I saw, for example, how you used what you had learned about writing in literacy in lessons about history. You also told me how well you are looked after in school. The teachers really care about each and every one of you and that helps you to grow up into good citizens. The school also listens to what you have to say through the school council. The way that you are able to organise charity appeals and the Meynell Mag is really useful in helping you to get ready for life in the future. The headteacher and other teachers are keeping a really close watch over how well you are doing and whether the school could do some things better. This is helping it to carry on improving.

Even good schools can carry on getting better. I have asked the school to do two things that will help it to do this. Those of you who are in the Nursery and Reception classes have a lovely outdoor area and you really enjoy climbing, pedalling and running around in it. I have asked the school to find ways to help you learn about lots of other things outside as well. Although teaching is good and improving in the school, it is better in some classes than others, so I have asked the school to make sure that every class has the chance to learn well. You can help by always trying your best in school.

I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knight Lead inspector