



Hillmorton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130887
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293657
Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007
Reporting inspector Tom Shine

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Watts Lane |
| School category | Community | | Hillmorton |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | Rugby CV21 4PE |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01788 544309 |
| Number on roll (school) | 203 | Fax number | 01788 542679 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Kathryn Lawrence |
| | | Headteacher | Mark Plumbley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 April 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including places for ten pupils in the designated Speech and Language Resource Base. There is a privately run pre-school facility on site as well as a breakfast club. The movement of pupils in and out of the school through the year is higher than average. Since last September the school has been led by an acting headteacher and a newly appointed headteacher will take up post after the half-term break. On the first day of the inspection, the school was closed to pupils because of adverse weather conditions but it was open as usual on the second day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'A well balanced school, and a pleasure to be part of it', is how one parent accurately described this improving school whose effectiveness is satisfactory. The acting headteacher has led the school well during a period of instability and, together with the senior staff, he is working hard to drive improvement forward. The senior staff have maintained an atmosphere in which pupils enjoy learning. The acting headteacher has identified accurately many of the main areas that need to be addressed to ensure effective learning can take place. For example, he has introduced a very good system for tracking the progress of individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and indicating where they make the most progress. These and other actions demonstrate an adequate appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a satisfactory capacity to improve. However, although leadership and management are satisfactory, there remain weaknesses in the school's self-evaluation. For example, the new systems are not yet consistently implemented and procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough. The chair of governors leads the governing body well and liaises effectively with the school.

While the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, teachers' planning does not consistently ensure that the work set is matched adequately to the needs of all the pupils. In addition, teachers' marking is generally not as helpful as it could be in showing pupils how well they are doing and how to improve their work. While pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory, standards at the end of Year 6 were still below average in 2006. This was partly the result of an exceptionally high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in that year group and partly because of numbers of pupils moving into the group late in the year. Targets for the current Year 6 are more challenging than previously and pupils are working well to achieve them.

The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory and their care and support are good. Pupils enjoy school and like their teachers because, 'You get good education here'. This enjoyment is reflected in the improved attendance rate which is now in line with the national average. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of the high value placed on these areas. In the Reception, where teaching and learning are good, children settle in well and make good progress in all areas, including language, numeracy and personal and social development. From Year 1 onwards, pupils enjoy lessons and say their teachers 'are nice'. They have a good awareness of why exercise is important, 'because it makes you fit and healthy'. They also choose healthy foods at lunchtime. They are confident and knowledgeable about the importance of keeping safe and a group of pupils nodded in agreement when one of them said, 'There is always someone to support and help me'. They are aware of the potential dangers in talking to strangers and understand the importance of road safety. Behaviour is good throughout the school. The curriculum is satisfactory with an adequate number of activities after school, although their range is narrowly focused on physical activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation by monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously and ensuring that pupils' achievement is monitored systematically and consistently across the school.
- Improve planning to ensure that work is closely matched to all pupils' abilities.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and feedback help pupils to understand how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and progress are satisfactory. When children join the school in the Reception their abilities are below average. They make good progress and achieve well. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is broadly average. The results of the national assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, although a lower proportion than average reached the higher levels in reading and writing. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.

The results of the 2006 tests for 11-year-olds were below average in English, mathematics and science. In the present Year 6, pupils are making satisfactory progress and are working at broadly average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties receive adequate support and make satisfactory progress, while pupils from the designated Speech and Language Resource Base make good progress. From Year 1 onwards, pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they might, as work set is not always appropriately matched to their abilities. This particularly affects the potentially high attainers as well as those who need additional support. Pupils' developing skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Everyone treats each other with respect. Pupils benefit from discussions of moral issues in assemblies and reflect sensitively on their own actions and their effects on others. Most pupils display positive attitudes to school and the activities that are offered. From an early age pupils enjoy their time in school. The majority of them are confident individuals who are eager to talk about what they are doing. They know they can make a difference in improving the school and are encouraged to do so. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and the community. Pupils of all ages spoke of being involved in the selection process for the appointment of the new headteacher. Older pupils said, 'It was a very important thing to be involved with'. Members of the school council take their jobs seriously and inform the school well of their work. They are currently working on developing the courtyard area. Pupils speak maturely and sensitively about

others who are less fortunate than they are. Harvest produce is collected and given to local senior citizens and pupils regularly raise money for charities. Pupils' well-developed social skills provide them with a good basis for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but inconsistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. In the Reception, the teacher provides a variety of interesting and exciting activities that are well planned to match the wide range of abilities in the class. Consequently, pupils enjoy their time in school, learn well and make good progress. In the rest of the school, teachers' planning is not rigorous enough, resulting in work that is too hard for some pupils and not challenging enough for others.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes well. Teachers and teaching assistants generally work well together, although some teaching assistants do not intervene or use their initiative to support pupils as well as they might. Marking generally does not provide clear enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by many visits to places of interest, such as museums, and by field trips and a residential visit for Year 5 pupils. Visitors to school include staff from the local radio station, to record the school choir, and 'Buster Bear', to highlight the dangers of playing on building sites. All these activities reinforce pupils' learning and contribute well to their personal development. Pupils say they would like more variety in the satisfactory range of after-school activities. Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has also improved since the previous inspection. Pupils in the designated Speech and Language Resource Base are given learning programmes well suited to their individual needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. There are good procedures for ensuring health and safety, and child protection procedures have been recently improved. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe and well cared for in school. Good arrangements for pupils with speech and language difficulties and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities ensure that they are fully integrated

into the school community. Good links have been developed with a range of external agencies to help provide for the specific needs of these pupils. The way pupils are supported and guided personally is good. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Weaknesses in some teachers' marking result in pupils being unsure of what they have to do to improve. Not all teachers make effective use of the school's good systems for tracking pupils' progress. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is satisfactory and it is good for pupils who attend the designated Speech and Language Resource Base.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has led the school well since his appointment, without the support of a deputy headteacher. He has managed a difficult period of budgetary reductions and consequent losses of staff well and has managed to maintain staff morale. He is supported adequately by his senior members of staff. The leadership team has a reasonable knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the school although the programme for monitoring teaching is not rigorous enough to improve its quality. The acting headteacher has introduced a very good system for monitoring pupils' progress but this is not yet being implemented by all staff. Capable administrative staff ensure that the school runs well. The governors are very supportive and are led well by the chair but their monitoring of standards is just adequate.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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.

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 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 | 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

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to the inspectors when they came to your school recently. We were glad that you were in school for the second day of the inspection as we liked talking to you and to your teachers. The education and teaching you receive are satisfactory and things are getting better.

These are the things we liked most about your school

- When you first come to school in the Reception class, you make a good start to your education and do well, and you make satisfactory progress after that.
- The standards of your work are improving in English, mathematics and science but are still below average by the end of Year 6.
- You enjoy school, and most of you attend regularly.
- Your acting headteacher, who leads the school well, makes sure that those of you who need extra help get it.
- You told us you feel safe and you are given good care and support and sound levels of guidance.
- You behave and get on well with each other and with all members of staff.
- You understand the importance of exercise and eating healthily.

These are the things that we think could be better

- We have asked your teachers to ensure that your progress is constantly checked as you move through the school.
- We think that some of you could be doing harder work, while others find the work too hard.
- We also think that when teachers mark your work or talk to you about it, they should tell you what to do to improve it.

We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and wish you all well for the future.