



Hackleton CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 135063
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 295474
Inspection dates 22–23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hackleton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Northampton NN7 2AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 870086
Number on roll (school)	213	Fax number	01604 870751
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Steve Hutchinson
		Headteacher	Dawn Burns
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size primary school serves a semi-rural area of private housing. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well below average. The school holds many awards, including Artsmark Gold, Charter Mark, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools Silver and the Leading Aspect Award for inspirational learning. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and the school changed status in September 2005 from a community school to a Church of England voluntary aided school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Central to the school's success is the passion, vision and drive of the headteacher. Her exceptional leadership and view that everyone matters are highly evident in this very caring school community. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school. Their high respect and regard for the headteacher and staff was evident in the many questionnaires returned and in parents' glowing comments to inspectors, 'This is a fabulous school and is excellent in every way!' The praise is well deserved. The school's success is underpinned by pupils' excellent behaviour and the quality of the relationships. There is a very strong Christian atmosphere, where pupils care for each other, valuing each other's opinions. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils love school and there is a buzz of excitement as they eagerly carry out their work. One pupil said, 'I love learning,' as another one said, 'I can't wait to build the pyramid as part of our work about Egypt.' Pupils are very confident and greatly enjoy responsibility and having a say in how the school is run. They know how to keep themselves safe and are extremely conscious of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles.

The youngest children enjoy a range of exciting experiences within a caring and sensitive environment. This provides a springboard for their love of learning, they make good progress and attain standards above those expected by the time they enter Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently high. Pupils achieve very well from broadly average starting points, but more able pupils do not attain quite as well in writing as they do in reading. Strategies have been implemented to tackle this, for example an emphasis on drama to enable pupils to understand better the characters they are writing about. Such strategies have been very effective in Years 1 to 3, but have not had sufficient time to influence fully the standards in Years 4 to 6. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties make excellent progress thanks to the expert help and support they receive. Assessment systems are well established and the progress of all pupils is checked rigorously against challenging targets.

Stimulating activities are at the heart of outstanding teaching and learning. Teachers are imaginative in finding ways to involve pupils in learning and to widen their horizons through an exciting range of experiences. The outstanding curriculum is fun, creative and stimulating. It is complemented very well by a rich diet of additional activities including visits, visitors and after-school clubs.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher leads a talented team, including excellent governors, who willingly try out new ideas in order to provide the very best for pupils. The school is never complacent as it seeks to maintain and improve the already high standards. The school's own evaluation of its work underestimates its performance in all aspects. This is clearly the result of modesty rather than misjudgment. The school knows itself extremely well, and has a clear and exciting vision for its future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils in Years 4 to 6 achieve as well in writing as they do in reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

By Year 6, standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievement is outstanding. However, more able pupils make faster progress in reading than in writing. The school correctly identified that standards in reading were higher than those in writing and have implemented a range of very good strategies to lessen the gap. These strategies have significantly influenced standards in Years 1 to 3 but there is still work to be done in Years 4 to 6. By the end of Year 6, fewer pupils attain Level 5 in writing than in reading.

From a broadly average base, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the expected learning goals. As a result, they begin Year 1 with attainment above that expected. Good progress continues and by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future and face it with confidence. Their enthusiasm and pride oozes out in their chatter about events, projects, playtime and the newly introduced 'snack-shack.' From the moment children enter the Foundation Stage, the school does its utmost to develop their social skills and is very successful in this. Pupils show exemplary attitudes to each other and to their teachers. They are courteous to visitors and respect the views of their peers. Behaviour is outstanding and attendance very good. Membership of the school council contributes very well to personal development. Pupils lead active lives, eat healthily and know what to do to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their strong sense of self-worth is reflected when they say that 'everyone here is special.' They very much enjoy helping others and are proud to be nominated as playground pals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

High quality teaching leads to high standards and excellent achievement. All lessons are rigorously planned and there is a very good match of work to what pupils already know, so they build very effectively on their earlier learning. Very occasionally, however, the pace of learning slows when pupils spend too long a time on one activity.

Outstanding relationships between adults and pupils and interesting lessons help to ensure that pupils behave extremely well, have productive attitudes towards their work, and are very keen to share their ideas. This enhances their learning.

Pupils are urged to do their best, but there is also a strong sense of fun and enjoyment in lessons that keep all pupils motivated. They are encouraged to take the initiative and teachers very effectively build on these skills so that the pupils are able to work and learn independently. For example, pupils learn how to judge the quality of others' work so that they can more critically examine their own.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

As a result of this exceptionally well-planned and creatively devised curriculum, the pupils learn very well and make excellent progress. The comment that the curriculum is 'varied, stimulating and exciting' is typical of those made by a number of parents. Effective planning ensures that pupils use their key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects. This brings an important relevance to their learning. An impressive and extensive range of visits, visitors and extra-activities very effectively enriches the curriculum and significantly enhances pupils' learning experiences.

In the past, the accommodation and lack of resources have restricted provision in the Foundation Stage. However, these issues have been recently rectified, enabling a very good range of practical activities to be provided in the classroom. Although the outdoor area is not fully developed, good progress is being made in its construction.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent attention paid to supporting individual pupils is another key factor in pupils' high levels of achievement and personal development. The detailed programme for personal, social and health education helps them to stay safe and keep physically, socially and emotionally healthy. Child protection procedures are rigorous and risk assessments are carried out in a very thorough manner. Pupils feel safe and as one commented, 'We know everyone – it is almost like a family.'

Detailed tracking of pupils' progress means that teachers can give them good guidance on the next steps of learning. Targets for individuals and groups are used very well to support learning. However, pupils are, generally, more aware of their literacy targets than those for mathematics. Those pupils with learning difficulties are identified very early and effective support is given to them so that they make very good progress towards their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The dedicated headteacher has excellent vision, leads by example, and is well supported by the staff. Morale is excellent and there is a strong team spirit. The work of the school is very well monitored by staff at all levels. Regular checks on teaching and learning lead to the identification of where practice is at its best and can be shared. Effective support is given where improvements are needed. Information about the pupils' performance is used exceptionally well to identify areas for improvement and intervention is swift and effective. More able pupils do not attain as well in writing as in reading and the school has acted quickly to bring about changes to teaching and the curriculum so that the gap is starting to close, significantly so in Years 1 to 3.

The governing body provides exceptional support, is very involved in the school and has a very good understanding of its strengths and development areas. It makes sure that the school sets itself challenging targets and monitors and evaluates progress towards them rigorously. With its track record of sustaining high achievement and continually improving provision, the school's leadership demonstrates an excellent capacity for 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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your ideas and opinions with us. We very much enjoyed our time with you. You and your parents are rightly proud of Hackleton School. You think it is excellent and we agree with you.

We would like to tell you what we found out.

- You make excellent progress and, by the time you are ready for secondary school, you reach high standards in your work.
- You have a wonderful headteacher. She is determined that with the support of all staff and governors you will have the very best time in school and she is very successful in making this happen.
- You all want to learn, work hard and are very well behaved. You are a credit to your school and your parents.
- Teaching is excellent and teachers do their very best to make learning fun and exciting. This is one of the reasons why you all enjoy school so much.
- You told us you feel very safe in school and that staff are very approachable, caring and helpful. We agree.
- You know how to make the right choices about keeping fit, healthy and safe.
- There are so many things to take part in and you told us how much you enjoy the visitors, visits and clubs.
- Many of you are very good at reading and we have asked the school to make sure that you all do equally well in writing.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Hackleton Primary a fantastic school.