

Hemlington Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111664
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	301955
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynette Renahan
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Baldwin
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Briscoe Way Hemlington Middlesbrough TS8 9SJ
Telephone number	01642 591171
Fax number	01642 591019

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Inspection number	301955

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and the standards they reach, particularly between Years 3 and 6 and in English; the quality of the teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, particularly in relation to monitoring the school's performance, self-evaluation and the capacity to improve further.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons, break and assembly, the school's plans for further improvement and evidence of their impact on pupils' achievement. Discussions were held with pupils, parents, and staff, and questionnaires returned by parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this larger than average sized school are from White British family backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. An Infant Assessment Unit is accommodated in the school, which provides additional support for pupils experiencing difficulties in other mainstream schools. The school holds a number of awards which include: Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark, Activemark, Investors in People, Financial Management in Schools, BECTA, which recognises pupils' achievement in information and communications technology (ICT), the Diana Anti-bullying Award and the 'I CAN' award, which acknowledges children's achievements in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes). The school also won the Northern Grid for Learning North East Excellence in ICT Award 2008.

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, providing excellent value for money. Pupils flourish in a very happy, calm and nurturing setting. They achieve remarkably well, both academically and in their personal development. Pupils feel a keen sense of belonging to their school community and are particularly enthusiastic to contribute positively to it. They behave extremely well, show commendable attitudes to learning, and speak very knowledgeably about how to keep their bodies and their minds healthy. Pupils' excellent personal qualities provide a strong platform from which they develop high academic standards. Parents are very supportive. They have the 'highest praise for the school', and are confident that the commitment and devotion of staff ensure that their children benefit from a very high quality of education.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have been improving in recent years and are above average. Similarly, standards have also been rising at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics and science. In 2007, they were average overall, reflecting weaker performance in English, particularly in writing. This is why improving pupils' performance in writing has become a key school priority. The rigour, determination and success with which this matter has already been tackled are evident. School data and inspection evidence show that standards in Year 6 in 2008 are above average. Pupils have exceeded the challenging targets set, including those in writing. The trend of rising standards in mathematics and science is also set to continue. Furthermore, more pupils than previously in Years 3 to 5 are working beyond the levels expected for their age.

The outstanding progress of boys and girls of all ages, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is the result of the outstanding quality of teaching and learning. Teachers' infectious enthusiasm, high expectations, meticulous planning of work, clear organisation and skilful questioning, along with active and purposeful activities, make learning extremely lively, fun and stimulating. Pupils say that they have to work hard but are also very keen to do their best. Teachers regularly assess how well pupils are getting on. They use this information consistently well to plan work that precisely matches pupils' varying learning needs. Pupils are well informed about what they have to do to achieve their individual targets. They play a full and active part in checking whether or not they are achieving their learning goals. Consequently, pupils make rapid gains in their learning.

The curriculum is outstanding. The abundant range of national and local awards achieved reflects the impressive breadth and quality of provision. Excellent partnerships within the locality make a further strong contribution. Pupils particularly appreciate the wonderful range of enriching activities, especially the many and various after school clubs. They say that this is one of the reasons they enjoy school so very much. Making sure that pupils are equipped particularly well with the life skills they need to be successful beyond their primary education has a high priority in the curriculum. This shows in the advanced skills that pupils gain in many aspects of ICT, from pod casting to digital media, as well as in their ability to question, reason, wish and wonder. Staff are committed to and enthusiastic about several recent adaptations to the curriculum, designed specifically to boost pupils' achievement in writing. Nevertheless, they recognise that even more can be done to make sure that changes are firmly embedded in practice right across the school, so that standards in writing are as high as they can be.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the excellent support she receives from the deputy headteacher, leadership team and governors are key factors in the school's success. Their passion and determination for providing fully inclusive and high quality learning for the

pupils are shared and kept firmly in view. The professionalism, commitment and dedication of staff at all levels make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils feel very safe because the warmth, care and encouragement of staff radiate throughout. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Rigorous analysis of the school's performance pinpoints improvement priorities promptly and accurately. Regular consultations with staff, parents, pupils and governors give a very clear steer. Actions are meticulously planned and their impact and successes are monitored at every step. As a result, pupils' achievement is boosted where there is most need, for example, in writing. In recent years, unrelenting efforts to promote better attendance and to minimise any negative impact on pupils' progress have resulted in attendance levels rising significantly and now exceed the challenging target set. Although modest in its self-evaluation, this is a school that knows itself particularly well. Since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. There is a clear trend of rising standards across the school and the capacity to continue to improve further is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children start in the Nursery, their skills are below what is typical for their age. Their communication skills are sometimes low. Exceptionally warm and caring relationships, along with the very safe, vibrant, and well resourced learning environment that fires young imaginations, combine to ensure children develop a real thirst for learning. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities they have to develop their ICT skills. Teachers and support staff work together closely to find out how well children are progressing. They use their on-going records especially well to ensure the activities and skilful questioning help children to build firmly on what they can already do. Adults take every opportunity to help children to get along well together, to think carefully, to discuss their learning and to grow in confidence and independence. This outstanding provision reflects the excellent contribution of the Foundation Stage leader. She, along with her team, are diligent in highlighting carefully what more they can do to promote children's achievements even further. This is why, for example, additional support programmes are provided to boost speaking and listening skills. By the time children start Year 1, they have made outstanding progress and many children exceed the goals set nationally for their learning. The Foundation Stage enjoys, deservedly, a very good reputation in the locality.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no major areas for improvement but the school should:

- Ensure that adaptations made to promote writing are consistently and fully embedded, so that standards continue to rise further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

4 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hemlington Hall Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS8 9SJ

Thank you so much for the really warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of your school. You helped me to see why you enjoy it so very much. You were all extremely keen to talk to me and answered all my questions very thoughtfully. I particularly enjoyed joining in the Infant class assembly, along with so many of your very proud parents. I was very impressed with just how much you know about keeping your bodies and minds healthy. It was good to hear that you know the 'Tai Chi' sessions help you get ready for learning. You get lots of chances to learn by taking part in exciting activities, such as the 'Decade Day' in Year 5. All the adults care a great deal about you. They keep a very close eye on just how well you are getting on. This is helping them to find out very quickly where you might be able to do even better, such as in your writing. They give you lots of encouragement to do well and to grow in confidence. I enjoyed hearing about all the chances you have to make your school a better place to learn. You are all so very kind and caring. Your behaviour was really good all the time. I was pleased to hear that you think that the 'Zero Tolerance' approach to bullying is such a sensible thing. No wonder you feel so safe in your school.

Your parents told me how pleased they are with your school. I agree with them. Your school is an outstanding school. You reach higher standards at the end of Year 6 than pupils in many other schools. The rate at which you learn is very fast, and it is now getting quicker in your writing, too. Your high standards, as well as your brilliant attitudes, are why you are so well prepared for when you go to secondary school. Even though the adults who work at your school know that you do really well in your learning, they still keep looking to find out what else they can do to help you further. This is one of the reasons why you are doing more work to improve your writing. To help you further I have asked your school to:

- Make sure that all the changes that are being made to help you get better in your writing are used all the time, right across the school.

Best wishes to you all for a great future and I hope that your 'Wildlife Garden' is a great success.

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector