

# Halifax Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124670
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	302554
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert McKeown HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Fern
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms A Hennell James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Prince Of Wales Drive Ipswich IP2 8PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 683932
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Halifax Primary School is situated in Ipswich, Suffolk. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are some from minority ethnic families. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements of special educational needs, is higher than is typical for this size of school. There are four pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Children start school with standards which are below those expected for their age. The headteacher has led the school since May 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Halifax Primary School is improving quickly and now provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Several significant changes have been introduced since the last inspection and the school is well placed to make and sustain further improvements; it now offers satisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Achievement is much better than at the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory; most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, standards at the end of the Foundation Stage, in writing throughout the school and in older pupils' mathematics remain below average. The school is taking suitable action to raise standards and tackle underachievement. This includes tracking pupils' progress thoroughly and placing greater emphasis on identifying underachievement, accelerating progress and boosting attainment. Action taken to improve teaching has also proved successful so that all lessons are now at least satisfactory. The school realises that all teaching has to be at least good to enable all pupils to make swift progress and achieve higher standards. Pupils with learning difficulties, especially those who have their lessons in the support class where the teaching is outstanding, are making good progress.

There is a much calmer and more purposeful learning atmosphere in the school which contribute to pupils' satisfactory personal development and well-being. Their behaviour is good and supported well by the approaches teachers use in lessons and by the good guidance provided by the behaviour support assistant. The school systems for managing and monitoring behaviour are effective. Pupils say they now enjoy school much more, feel safe and believe that their views are listened to. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and teaching assistants are key contributors towards ensuring that learning is effective. There is an improved balance in the satisfactory curriculum and pupils are benefiting from the chance to take part in practical activities and study visits. The school day will be extended in September to increase learning time further. Swimming is a positive feature of the physical education (PE) curriculum which contributes well to pupils leading healthy lives. All members of the school community work well together, and with local support services, to ensure pupils receive good care, guidance and support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, appointed since the last inspection, provides strong and purposeful leadership and has a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. She is supported well by senior staff and together they have successfully tackled the issues identified at the last inspection and set clear priorities for further development. The leadership and management of some curriculum subjects require improvement. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The governing body has adopted a more systematic approach to monitoring the work of the school. Governors now have a better understanding of their role as critical friends and how to keep a check on the actions taken to bring about improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards particularly in writing and in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to enable pupils to make good progress in all lessons.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of curriculum subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievements and standards were inadequate at the last inspection. Since then they have improved and are now satisfactory. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage remain below average. The school's assessments indicate that they are particularly low in social and emotional development and in early literacy skills. Children in the Reception classes made too little progress in the first two terms of the year but following improvements in teaching progress is now good. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved well and pupils have made good progress this year. Teachers' assessments indicate that standards will be broadly average in reading and above average in mathematics. Standards in writing have improved but remain a relative weakness. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Years 3 to 6 but rates of progress vary across year groups and subjects. The latest reported outcomes for Year 6 in 2006 indicate that standards in English were broadly average but they remained below average in mathematics and science. Not all the results for 2007 were available to inspectors; those that were showed improvements in science but not in mathematics. Having introduced effective systems for tracking pupils' progress, the school is able to demonstrate accelerated progress for many pupils and identify those who need additional support to help them catch up. The school has detected, and realises it has to tackle, a difference in the performance of boys and girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their moral and social development is good because of the consistently high expectations from staff. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a growing understanding of what is expected and those with challenging behaviour are being supported well. They are keen to please and enjoy being praised for their efforts, something the school does really well. Pupils work together happily because the school encourages this kind of approach and helps those who find it more difficult. Pupils know about the importance of eating sensibly at break times and they all leave Year 6 able to swim to the national standard. They are satisfactorily prepared for the future with the school's increased emphasis on developing suitable literacy and numeracy skills. Year 6 pupils are confident about their move to secondary school. This is helped by the good links established with the partner school English department and additional visits for pupils who might be less confident about moving on. Attendance has improved significantly and now meets the primary school average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improved since the last inspection. A significant strength of the teaching is in the good management of behaviour which ensures that pupils' learning is not disrupted. Teaching assistants provide very effective and caring support for pupils. In general, teachers make good use of assessment to track pupils' progress and to set targets to help them improve their work. Greater reference to targets in lessons would further

aid pupils' progress. Where teaching and learning are most effective, lessons are carefully planned to provide a variety of activities which maintain interest and meet the needs of the range of ability found in classes. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good, the pace is less dynamic and teachers do not provide suitably challenging work to meet the needs of all pupils. Marking of pupils' work has improved but remains inconsistent. Some marking is helpful in giving pupils advice about how to make progress, but in other cases comments made are not specific enough to prompt improvement. Noise travelling between classes is no longer an issue for older pupils but it continues to adversely affect some lessons for younger pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and will meet the minimum recommended time when the school day is extended in September. The curriculum for younger children in the Foundation Stage has recently been transformed and is currently good. Curriculum provision for pupils with learning difficulties is also good. The school has made effective use of local authority support to strengthen the curriculum in science and plans are in place to improve provision in information and communication technology (ICT). Recently, emphasis has been placed on increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning by engaging them in more investigational work and in taking part in theme days for reading and art and design. Some good displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievement and increase motivation for learning. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment and sport. These include a number of visits, a range of competitive sports, musical activities and a gardening club. There are fewer activities organised for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

There is good care and guidance, especially for pupils with additional needs. Pupils who attend the learning support class and afternoon nurture groups make good progress in improving their personal and social skills because staff carefully tailor support to their individual needs. The school emphasises the importance of achievement through a powerful mixture of encouragement, rewards and praise. The recent appointment of a learning mentor has further strengthened the capacity for guiding those pupils who are underachieving. Teachers are using learning targets more successfully to help pupils improve their work. The school has begun to engage parents more in gaining an understanding of what their children are learning at school. Suitable procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and good links are maintained with local family support agencies. A strong working partnership with the educational welfare officer (EWO), incentives for good attendance and a stronger line taken on absence have contributed to the improvement in attendance. The school recognises that it needs to adopt a race equality policy, in line with government requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory and in some respects they are good. Under the very good leadership of the new headteacher, expectations for what can be achieved have been raised and the school is now improving rapidly. A strong and dynamic partnership with the

deputy headteacher, and more recently with staff in the leadership team, has secured good improvements on all the key issues from the last inspection. Changes introduced have resulted in better behaviour amongst pupils, better teamwork from the staff and positive support from parents. Improvement work on the school building has transformed much of the environment, making it more conducive to effective teaching. Rigorous and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems have been put in place to keep a close check on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching and learning. A determined approach to tackling inadequate teaching has ensured that lessons are now never less than satisfactory and often good. The school's special educational needs coordinator manages the support for pupils with learning difficulties very effectively. The English and mathematics subject leaders make an increasingly positive contribution but the school acknowledges that improvements are required in the leadership of other subjects. Progress on raising standards has been steady but the leadership team is not complacent and realises that more has to be done. Under the astute leadership of a new chair of governors, the governing body has sharpened its approach to monitoring the school's effectiveness.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

6 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Halifax Primary School, Ipswich, IP2 8PY

You probably know that I have been coming to your school each term to check on the improvements Ms Hennell James and the teachers have been making. I'm pleased to say that your school is now doing much better and inspectors won't need to visit as often.

Lots of improvements have been made in the last year. There are many interesting things going on so everyone is enjoying school more. We were impressed with the improvements in behaviour. You told us that you are much happier at school and that your teachers are making sure everyone gets on well together. We enjoyed seeing you at work in your lessons and looking at some of the good work in your books and displayed on the walls. Most of you are now making much better progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. We think it is a really good idea to have learning targets so you know what you need to do to improve. We were particularly pleased to see that your attendance has improved and that more of you are taking less time off from school. Ms Hennell James and the governors have some good plans to make your school even better, so I hope you will do all you can to help them achieve their aim.

Before we left we asked Ms Hennell James and the staff to help you achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. We asked your teachers to try and make sure all your lessons are good ones so you can make as much progress as possible. We also asked Ms Hennell James to help your teachers keep a close check on what goes on in each of the subjects you are learning.

You have a lot to look forward to in the years ahead. Make sure you do your best and enjoy every minute.

With best wishes,

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector