

# New Hall Primary and Children's Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103395
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308305
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Barter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roy Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	M Pickering
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Langley Hall Drive Sutton Coldfield B75 7NQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 645170
<b>Fax number</b>	01214645171

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is situated on the Falcon Lodge estate of Sutton Coldfield. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from ethnic minority families and a small number speak English as an additional language. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to claim free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Children start school in the Foundation Stage Unit (Nursery or Reception) with skills and abilities that are lower than expected for their age.

Since the previous inspection, the junior section of the school has undergone a significant rebuilding programme to enable pupils of all ages to be together on one site. The new building opened in September 2006. The Children's Centre is an integrated part of the school. It provides full day care (New Heights) for children from the ages of 0-3 and a wide range of family support services, community facilities and outreach projects as part of its extended service. The school provides 'wrap around' care for pupils in the before- and after-school club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. The headteacher and her deputy have been steadfast in their determination to bring the school together under one roof and provide pupils with a good environment for learning. At the same time, there has been a strong vision and high level of commitment to children, families and the local community through the development of the Children's Centre and its extended services. Parents are very positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the new building, saying it has made an enormous difference to their children's learning and enjoyment of school. They appreciate the day care facilities and services available to them in the Children's Centre. The increasing number of children who are moving through into the Foundation Stage Unit reflects parents' confidence in the school.

The school is now settled and is well placed to continue its quest to improve the quality of education. Leaders and managers, including governors, have a very good understanding of what needs to improve to ensure all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. The school development plan has a clear focus to address past underachievement and raise standards but does not have specific targets against which leaders and managers can monitor the effectiveness of strategies that have been put in place. The deployment of senior leaders across each key stage demonstrates the drive to improve teaching from being satisfactory to consistently good across the school. Recent improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage Unit, which is now satisfactory, demonstrate the school's capacity to take effective action where significant weaknesses have been identified.

Children make a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage Unit. The assessment of children's attainment in Reception was inaccurate in the past. This hindered teachers' understanding of what pupils should be expected to achieve in Years 1 and 2. Careful analysis of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is now helping teachers to fill the gaps in their learning, and the 2007 Year 2 assessments, while still below average, improved as a result. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. While pupils have made good progress from their starting points at the end of Year 2, their achievement is only satisfactory overall. This is because they did not achieve well enough in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and they have had to catch up in their learning through Years 3 to 6. The school is acutely aware that, had this not been the case, pupils could have reached higher standards at the end of Year 6.

Pupils are happy and enjoy school, typically describing it as a place where 'people are kind and friendly'. Good care, guidance and support and a satisfactory but improving curriculum help them behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Through the curriculum and extra activities they learn to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They are keen participants in sports and swimming. Pupils contribute well to the community. They make the school a better place to be by helping others as peer mediators, playground friends and school councillors. Pupils get on well with others. They co-operate well in pairs and groups, share ideas and take responsibility. They are satisfactorily prepared for the move to secondary school.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage Unit is satisfactory. The school's senior leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers are helping staff understand how to plan a curriculum which ensures that children now receive their full

entitlement to all of the expected areas of learning. Staff are beginning to develop their expertise in observing and assessing children's progress. Parents appreciate the newly introduced home visits which help their children to settle well. Children's personal development is satisfactory. They are becoming increasingly independent as they learn to choose activities that interest them and take care of themselves and their belongings. Children behave well and most enjoy learning although some wander from activity to activity when they have too much choice and are unsure of what to do. The school has identified that reception children have gaps in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The introduction of regular, focused sessions to help pupils learn their letters and sounds is beginning to improve their progress in early reading and writing skills. Staff make sure children are safe and well cared for in the indoor environment. Following the building works, the outdoor area has yet to be fully developed.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the good practice in teaching to all classes so that pupils make consistently good progress each year and reach higher standards by the time they leave.
- Build the expertise of all staff in the Foundation Stage Unit to ensure that every child achieves as well as they can.
- Set clear goals for success in the school development plan so that all leaders and managers can measure the effectiveness of strategies put in place to achieve them.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Improved assessment of their learning from the end of Reception is beginning to accelerate their progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 improved from being well below average in 2006 to below average in 2007. Strategies to develop pupils' writing have been effective in raising standards, but their reading skills lag behind because they have not previously been developed well enough in the Foundation Stage. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average for the past three years. The school sets challenging targets because it recognises that pupils have not done well enough in the past and expectations must be raised if they are to achieve higher standards. School data and pupils' work indicate that progress, while still uneven across year groups, is improving. Effective support in class helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few who are learning to speak English to make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development contributes well to the school's atmosphere. 'My daughter is thriving' and 'My children thoroughly enjoy school and have settled in well' are typical comments made by parents. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly good. They get on with others, know how to behave well and are very clear that bullying and name-calling is unacceptable. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and are keen participants in sports and games because they know that they keep them fit. They learn about the importance of eating a healthy diet although some find it difficult to follow this through in practice. Pupils are good members of their school and local community. They help each other with tasks, support

younger children at playtime and are keen to help others as peer mediators because, as they say, 'We make a difference to other children.' Most pupils attend school regularly. However, overall attendance levels are lower than expected because a few families do not send their children to school as regularly as the school would wish, and despite its strenuous encouragement to do so.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

While teaching is satisfactory overall, the good practice seen in a number of classes is starting to influence and improve teaching quality across the school. Teachers plan well structured activities which build effectively on what pupils already know and can do. They explain clearly what pupils are to learn and what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson. This is supportive and gives most pupils a clear purpose for learning, although expectations for more able pupils are not always sufficiently specific to ensure they achieve well. In some classes, pupils' progress is slow because they are not sufficiently prepared for their tasks and find it hard to get started. Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils play a full part in lessons. They give effective support to help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities work towards their individual targets and ensure that pupils who are learning to speak English are fully included in all of the planned activities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides more interest for pupils as teachers develop the natural links between subjects. Pupils use information and communication technology skills well in other subjects, but there are insufficient planned opportunities for practising their literacy and numeracy skills in the same way. Strategies to motivate boys' learning are effective and improving their progress. The curriculum successfully promotes many aspects of pupils' personal development. Regular lessons in sports, and swimming in the school's pool, promote pupils' understanding of the need for exercise to keep fit and healthy. Visits and visitors to the school extend pupils' experiences and knowledge of the wider world. The school has yet to identify those pupils who have specific gifts and talents and ensure that the curriculum helps them to reach their potential.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good pastoral care for all pupils, including the most vulnerable, helps pupils to feel safe and happy at school. They know that they will always get the help they need because adults listen to them. Staff build good links with parents and encourage them to help their children's learning at home. As a Children's Centre, the school offers a very good range of support services for children of all ages. These are highly valued by the families who use them. Pupils greatly enjoy the before- and after-school club and this helps working parents considerably. Academic guidance is good. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing and find teachers' marking helpful because it helps them know how to improve their work. Information on what is expected at the end of each lesson helps pupils to understand how to be successful in their learning. This is particularly useful in English where pupils know what they need to do to get a better standard of writing.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Now that the school is settled, the headteacher and senior leaders have been able to concentrate effectively on ensuring that gaps in pupils' learning, as a result of past underachievement in Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, are ironed out. Although there is more to do to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress, there are signs that the right action is taking effect. Regular and accurate monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress by leaders and managers has raised expectations of pupils' achievement and helped the school to identify its development priorities. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and are now holding it to account for any areas of weakness. They know what needs to be improved and are keen to have clear targets set for school improvement so that they can check how well the school is doing in achieving them. The school successfully manages its growing provision for children and families through the Children's Centre and extended services.

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## Annex A

## 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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	3

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we came to visit your school. I would like to say a special thank you to your head boy and girl and the chair of the school council for being so helpful and showing us to our room when we arrived. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. That means that there are many good things and a few areas that need to be improved.

- These are the good things:
- You are learning everything you should and by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards similar to those of most other children of your age.
- You are growing up to be sensible and caring young people who know it is important to behave well and be kind and helpful to others.
- You enjoy learning lots of interesting things and are keen to do activities outside school too, such as sports and games. Well done on being great swimmers!
- Your teachers and all the other adults really care about you. They help you a lot with your work by marking it and telling you what you should do to improve. You told us that you think this is really good.
- Your headteacher and the other staff have worked hard to make sure you all have a good building in which to work and learn together. You are obviously very proud of it and I think you are right to be so!
- Your parents told us they like your school very much. They think the fact that you can come to New Heights as a baby and go all the way through school is great.

Now you have all settled in, the adults are working hard to make sure your learning gets even better. To help, I have asked them to concentrate on these three things:

- Make sure that you are taught as well as possible all of the time so that you do even better as you get older.
- Help the staff in the Foundation Stage Unit to find out even more about how young children develop and learn best.
- Keep checking how well the school is doing and whether the things that are happening are working well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

17 October 2007

Dear Children



**Inspection of New Hall Primary and Children's Centre,  
Sutton Coldfield, B75 7NQ**

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I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs Helen Barter, Lead inspector