

Haynes Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109456
Local Authority	BEDFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	309989
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Valerie Oertel
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2004
School address	Foresters Close Haynes Bedford MK45 3PR
Telephone number	01234381225
Fax number	01234381225

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is of smaller than average size and takes children from Haynes and surrounding villages in mid-Bedfordshire. The large majority of children are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. No children are currently eligible for free school meals and there are fewer than average with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Children are happy and enjoy their time here and parents are pleased with the quality of education offered. As one notes, 'this is a good school that provides the education I expect'. The school has good capacity to continue to improve and provides good value for money.

Children of different ages and abilities make good overall progress and achieve well. At the age of seven and when they leave at nine standards are above average. In reading, many make very good progress so that they read confidently and proficiently for their age. Most children also write well and are able to produce good quality pieces of work with accurate spelling and neat handwriting. However, some children do not develop the same high-level skills in mathematics. In recent years, assessments at the age of seven and nine have shown that, while most reach the level expected for their age, fewer attain above the average in mathematics.

The personal development of children is good. Most behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. There are good relationships among the children and with the adults who work with them, therefore everyone feels safe in school, knowing that there is always someone they can talk to if they are unhappy or have concerns. Children understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, while the school informs children and their families about the benefits of a healthy diet, there is more to do to encourage parents to help their children to make wise choices in their packed lunches.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers explain things well and give plenty of encouragement to children. Teaching assistants offer caring support, but they sometimes miss opportunities to challenge everyone, including those of higher attainment. Curriculum planning is good and there is an interesting range of activities which encourage children to work well in groups. The care, support and guidance of children are good overall. Staff know the children and recognise their needs well. Teachers conscientiously track the progress children make and work purposefully to ensure that best use is made of such information in planning for the next steps.

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher fulfils the varying roles of head of a small school well and with commitment to the local community. She leads the staff team effectively, ensuring that the school continues to move forward. School self-evaluation is good and staff recognise its strengths and weaknesses accurately because there is continual informal checking of the work of the school. However, there is only limited formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and of pupils' work and this has not always helped to identify exactly what the school needs to do to tackle issues. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive but not all are fully aware of areas for further development, particularly in mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. They enter the school with a wide range of early learning experiences and skills. With small cohorts, the attainment on entry to the school varies quite widely from year to year. Overall, attainment when children start in school is slightly above average. This is particularly true in their personal and social development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and often in their speaking and listening skills.

Teaching is good and children make good progress in the Reception class because the curriculum is well planned to ensure that activities have a practical basis and often an element of fun. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are effective and good use is made of the new facilities, including the outdoor play area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all children achieve as well as they can in mathematics.
- Develop a programme for all staff and, where appropriate, governors to enable them to be involved in regularly monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress as they move through the school. At the end of the Foundation Stage, most achieve and many exceed the targets expected for their age. Throughout the school children develop good personal and social skills so that they feel confident to tackle the range of activities. Most have good speaking and listening skills and are keen to learn to read and write like their friends and family. At the age of seven and nine children do well in reading and writing assessments, with a good proportion in recent years achieving levels above those expected for their age. In mathematics assessments most children attain the average levels but fewer reach the higher levels than in reading and writing. While the achievement of all children, including those with learning difficulties, is good overall, this is not as secure in numeracy as it is in literacy. In some years boys have not done as well as girls but there appears no clear reason for this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of learners are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities to develop social skills in small and larger group tasks and, at times, in activities involving the whole school. Assemblies and discussions of class and school rules emphasise how children should be accountable for their own actions and become responsible citizens. Most children are keen to live up to the expectations of those around them. Attendance is above average. The majority behave well and understand how to adopt safe practices. The poorer behaviour of a minority of children, usually boys, is dealt with well, although a small number struggle to think of how their behaviour and attitudes affect others. Children enjoy taking on responsibilities within school by carrying out small jobs and through the school council. They work together well when organising and running charity events. These activities enable them to develop a range of skills that help them prepare well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective in meeting the range of learners' needs. Staff make clear to the children that they are expected to behave well and work hard. In Year 1 there is good use of statements as headings for their work that explain tasks and which are useful for later assessments. At the end of lessons, staff encourage children to reflect on what they have achieved and what they

need to do to improve. The marking of work is satisfactory but brief. The level of challenge offered in lessons is generally good and staff use praise well to motivate children. However, from the sample of recent work, it is clear that children of all abilities sometimes take part in the same or similar tasks and the challenge for the highest attaining children is not always secure. Staff in support roles do not always demand enough of children. At times they are peripheral to activities and miss opportunities to support and involve children in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners well. Planning is carefully based on national guidance and with a two-year rolling programme for mixed-age classes. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy skills. Parents and volunteers help children practise their reading so that they become confident readers and writers. Staff have recognised that numeracy standards have not been as high, and planning for mathematical activities is thorough and with an appropriate emphasis on the different areas of mathematics. However, at times, the organisation of very similar tasks for all does little to develop higher-level skills. The school has worked steadily to improve resources for, and the teaching of, information and communication technology. Nevertheless, the sample of recent work and lesson observations indicate that more could be done to extend day-to-day usage of computers to support learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

With relatively small class sizes and good relationships across the school, learners are cared for, guided and supported well. Support for children with learning difficulties is seen as a priority, and is good. In personal, social and health education sessions and in circle time discussions, children have the opportunity to talk about their concerns and receive good advice on matters of personal development. Displays around the school show how seriously staff take their responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure environment for all. Child protection procedures and the checks on those who help in school fully meet current requirements. Teachers collect a good range of information from the tracking of children's progress. This information is used well by teachers to plan future work that moves pupils on in their learning. However, at times, it could be used more effectively by support staff to challenge different groups of children, but particularly those of higher ability.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are effective and ensure that the school functions as a successful and pleasant place to be. This has enabled the school to almost double in size in recent years. The headteacher is well respected by parents and staff and works successfully to combine her role as a headteacher with a regular teaching commitment. The senior teacher, Foundation Stage leader and special educational needs co-ordinator all carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. Subject leaders work with colleagues to identify strengths and weaknesses, but more could be done to extend the programme to rigorously monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in order to identify the further steps for improvement. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Some governors would like to extend

the number of formal meetings and visits to the school to ensure that they have the necessary first-hand information to hold more in-depth discussions, for example about standards and achievement.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	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	2
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	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

19 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Haynes Lower School, Haynes, Bedford, MK45 3PR

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited Haynes. You told me that most of you enjoy school and that you feel safe and like working and playing with your friends. I think your school is a happy place to be and feels like being part of a big family.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- Staff know and care for you well.
- You are happy in school and most of you are well behaved.
- Standards are good in reading and writing.
- Your headteacher and senior staff lead the school well.

These are areas that I think could be improved.

- More of you could do even better in mathematics.
- The staff, and sometimes the governors, could check what happens in the classroom and your work to make sure this is hard enough for you.

To help your school, you could make sure that you always listen when adults are explaining things and try hard all the time.

I would like to wish you every success in the future. Please remember to eat healthily!

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector