

# Harpur Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112523
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310914
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Glynn Storer

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	317
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Terry Corrigan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Patrick O'Connor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Trent Avenue Harpur Hill Buxton Derbyshire SK17 9LP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0129823261
<b>Fax number</b>	0129822710

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school serves a socially diverse community from the outskirts of Buxton and nearby rural villages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few from minority ethnic heritages. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is just below that normally expected of four-year-olds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is quite low for a school of this size.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Harpur Hill Primary is a good school. The governing body's decisive action to strengthen the senior leadership team is paying off. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has been the driving force behind the school's good record of improvement since its last inspection. The clear direction and support that he and the senior leaders give ensure that staff at all levels feel valued and able to contribute fully to pupils' learning and achievement. As a result, the quality of education that the school provides and the standards that pupils attain are improving. Robust management procedures, a strong team spirit and commitment from staff give the school a good capacity to improve further.

Standards have risen steadily in recent years and are above average in both Key Stages. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, because teaching and learning are good. Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and so set tasks that are challenging enough to move pupils on. They also teach pupils to be effective learners and as a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved in most classes. Another important factor in the raising of achievement has been the introduction of ability groups for the teaching of writing and mathematics. This arrangement has boosted the achievements of pupils of all abilities, because the work that they do is closely matched to their needs and prior attainments. Teaching pupils in small groups also gives the added support or challenge that many pupils need and in this respect, the work of school's very able support staff is outstanding.

The curriculum is good because it embodies systematic approaches to pupils' academic and personal development. The main strength of current provision is the range and quality of enrichment activities. Along with good standards of care, guidance and support, these result in good levels of personal development and well-being. They also do much to promote safe, healthy lifestyles and to increase pupils' enjoyment in learning. However, the school's resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are inadequate and so there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers and other devices to improve their learning across the curriculum, even though their basic ICT skills are sound.

The school works exceptionally well with others for the benefit of its pupils, especially those who are in any way vulnerable. Consequently, most parents value and support the school. As one parent said, 'I would not wish for my child to go anywhere else for his important start in life.' Procedures for evaluating the work of the school are thorough, yet entirely supportive. As such, they underpin staff and whole-school development effectively. Subject leaders contribute satisfactorily, but many are newly in post and so there is scope for their role in monitoring of standards and quality to be strengthened. Staff and governors share an understanding of areas for improvement, but governors do not gather enough first-hand information about the work of the school that would strengthen their role as a critical friend.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage, because the provision is good. When they arrive, children's attainment is slightly below that expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They progress well, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and by end of Reception they are working firmly in line with national expectations. Effective partnerships with parents, external agencies and playschools mean that children

receive good support and quickly settle. Staff use thorough initial and on-going assessments to plan a good range of learning opportunities that are well matched to children's needs. Furthermore, staff are well trained and the teaching is good. There is a suitable balance of child initiated and teacher directed experiences and staff use all space, including the outdoor area, to children's benefit. As self-evaluation has shown, more needs to be done to develop children's early writing skills, and staff are already providing for this as often as they can.

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

- Improve resources and facilities for ICT and ensure that pupils have access to ICT as an aid to learning all subjects.
- Give subject leaders and governors a more prominent role in monitoring and evaluating standards and quality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils achieve well from starting points that are often below those normally expected of four-year-olds. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2006, overall standards and those of reading and writing in particular, were significantly above the national average. The vast majority achieved well in relation to their broadly average attainments on entry to Year 1. Preliminary results from 2007 and pupils' current work present a similarly good picture of standards and achievement. In 2006, pupils' achievements at the end of Year 6 were barely satisfactory. Standards in science were particularly low and boys performed less well than boys nationally. However, results from 2007 indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science subjects rose above the national average. Standards in science recovered strongly, with over half of the pupils attaining above average scores. By the 2007 national tests, pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 was securely satisfactory and most boys performed as well as girls. Inspection evidence and the school's tracking indicate that current standards in Year 6 are also above national expectations. Their progress, from below average starting points in Year 3, has been good and most pupils are on course to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very friendly and polite to visitors. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Most pupils behave very well. The few pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties adjust well because they receive effective support. Good attendance reflects pupils' great enjoyment of school. Pupils know how to maintain their personal safety and lead a healthy lifestyle. Most take plenty of physical exercise and are proud to represent their school in events such as dance festivals and competitive sports. However, a few still bring sugary and salty snacks to school. Pupils take seriously the jobs they have, enthusiastically raising funds for charities and being an influential voice in school life through the school council. Pupils leave school with good basic skills in literacy and numeracy, sound ICT skills and the ability to work on their own and in teams. As such, they are well prepared for secondary school and future employment.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Much teaching is lively and engaging. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. They give very effective one-to-one support and group support to pupils of all abilities, including the gifted and talented. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their capacity to cope with demanding work. They make good use of assessment information to plan lesson tasks. These promote good progress because they are closely matched to pupils' abilities and prior attainments. In a few lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers do not establish expectations for good work-related behaviour and do not make the best use of time. Pupils become distracted and restless and do not have enough time for independent work. They learn less effectively as a result and do not make the best possible progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. It is well organised so that pupils in both single and mixed-age classes receive similar learning opportunities. The grouping of pupils by ability for mathematics and for writing in Key Stage 2 has been effective in raising standards in these subjects. Furthermore, special groups, which support pupils with additional learning or emotional needs enable these pupils to progress well. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship supports their personal development well. Curriculum enrichment is good. Pupils get a good amount of physical activity through timetabled lessons and through a good range of extra-curricular activities. Additional activities also cater for pupils who are not inclined towards sport, through the gardening club, the school magazine and opportunities for music and foreign language activities. A good range of educational visits, visitors and special events effectively add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. However, unsatisfactory ICT resources and facilities restrict the part that computers and other devices play in pupils' learning, though their basic ICT skills are satisfactory.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. However, the personal care for pupils is excellent. Pupils feel safe and secure because staff are well trained and deployed to meet the needs of all, but especially of vulnerable pupils. Parents appreciate the quality of support that they and their children receive from all staff, from the headteacher to the highly efficient administration team. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being fully meet current requirements. There are excellent links with external agencies so that pupils get the specialist support that they need. The nurture group provides effective support for those pupils who need help to develop emotionally and socially. Academic support is good. Pupils know what their targets are and they find marking helpful, particularly in improving their spelling and punctuation. Staff track pupils' progress carefully and give additional help to any who fall behind. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also receive good day-to-day support, because support assistants have a thorough understanding of pupils' personal and learning needs. However, pupils' individual targets are not always specific enough, making it difficult to say whether they have been met.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an excellent leader, whose vision and passion for the school bring out the best in all who work there. His success in building a strong team spirit amongst the staff, engaging the active support of the community and improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes has already added considerably to the quality of teaching and learning. He motivates staff by giving them a real part to play in improving the school. Consequently, senior leaders provide strong support. Together, they have brought rigour and accuracy to school self-evaluation and the direction that they provide gives the school a good capacity for further improvement. The school also promotes the leadership potential of other staff by developing their subject leadership responsibilities. However, many are new in post and need further experience and training in monitoring and action planning before their work can impact fully on standards and quality. Governors support the school satisfactorily, for example, in overseeing the extensive developments to the school site. However, there is also scope for governors to gather more first-hand information in order to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
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

<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	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

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harpur Hill Primary School, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 9LP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed watching you at work and at play as well as talking to pupils and others about all of the good things that you do in school.

This is what we found out about your school.

- Children in Foundation Stage get a good start to their time in school.
- Almost all of you behave well, work hard in your lessons and make good progress.
- All of the adults in school help you to learn and take really good care of you.
- You thoroughly enjoy all of the activities that there are for you.
- Most of you are growing up to be active and healthy, although some of you need to check that the snacks that you bring to school are good for you.
- Mr O'Connor and the staff have worked hard and have already made lots of things better.

In order to help, we have asked Mr O'Connor and the other adults to do two things.

- We have asked them to get more computers for the school and to make sure that you use them as often as possible to help you to learn.
- We have also asked teachers who lead the different subjects and governors to check more regularly on how well you and everybody else in school are doing, so that they can help the school to improve even more.

We hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at Harpur Hill Primary School.

Best wishes

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector