

# Herbert Strutt Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112789
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	311005
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Drew

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	183
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rachel Pygott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Murday
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Thornhill Avenue Belper Derbyshire DE56 1SH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 822 771
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 823 451

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average, but expanding. It serves a mixed residential area on the south-east side of Belper. The vast majority of pupils are White British and have entered the school with well below average attainment and a degree of economic disadvantage. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education in the form of a Reception class. It holds numerous awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Silver and the Greenwatch Award. It is in its third term in new premises on a new site.

## 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. It already has some outstanding features and shows an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Good leadership has prompted marked improvement since the last inspection. As a result, pupils' personal development is now outstanding. Excellent behaviour and a remarkably strong sense of enjoyment are typical, confirmed by high attendance levels. Pupils' awareness of personal safety, healthy lifestyles and how to contribute to others is excellent. Basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is extremely effective, making pupils far more reflective, confident, and considerate than is usual. They have a good awareness of other cultures, with the school successfully exploiting close personal links with communities in Ukraine, Eritrea, Canada and Australia.

The impact of leadership and management on improving standards and achievement is also clear. It has lifted achievement to the point where it is now good. Standards consistently match national averages at the end of Key Stage 2. Improved achievement stems from better quality teaching over recent years, but also reflects pupils' increasingly positive attitudes and the introduction of more effective checks on pupils' progress and support arrangements. The challenging targets set by the school have also helped to lift standards. However, in order to raise them further and accelerate progress again the school needs to set even more demanding targets. It is ideally placed to do this because of the commitment of its skilled staff and the eagerness of the pupils to learn.

Teaching and learning have been crucial to these improvements. Overall, the quality is now good. Unsatisfactory practice has been eradicated and outstanding lessons are increasingly common, especially in the EYFS and Year 6. A small proportion remain satisfactory. The headteacher, and other senior leaders more recently, have been highly effective in monitoring and supporting colleagues. Their observations lead to encouragement, the spread of best practice and the use of coaching where required. Hard decisions have been made when problems persisted. As a result, pupils' now show a real love of learning, staff work exceptionally well together and lessons are typically lively, engaging and challenging. The school can see scope for developing more excellent teaching by lifting pace and expectations and extending to all lessons the good self-evaluation and peer evaluation seen in some.

This is an exceptionally caring and supportive school. Hence, personal development has been transformed from an area of concern some years ago into the school's greatest strength. Staff give a very clear lead on how pupils should respect one another and adults in the school. They demonstrate this by the respect they show pupils and by consistently rewarding good behaviour and positive attitudes. They deal effectively with rare instances of unacceptable conduct. Procedures for improving attendance have had an excellent impact. Academic tracking is done well and continues to improve. New strategies for monitoring and supporting whole year groups are in place and beginning to increase effectiveness further.

Within the good curriculum schemes of work guide teaching effectively, giving skill development, creativity and active participation priority. As one parent put it, the school offers a 'supportive and really fun atmosphere which is widening my child's interests and stimulating her in every area of her work.' Parents are extremely positive about the school and a growing number become volunteer helpers, listening to pupils read, assisting gardening sessions or running

extra-curricular activities. Links with the community are good with several organisations make good use of the school's splendid new facilities. Ties with a local church are very strong.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children enter the Reception class with levels of skill and understanding below, and sometimes well below, that expected for their age. The excellent links with parents and pre-school providers ensure they settle quickly and soon become confident learners, happy to investigate, play cooperatively and share with others. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding because staff make learning interesting and enjoyable and care for them exceptionally well. Teaching is outstanding, enabling children to make excellent progress during their time in the EYFS. Progress is particularly good in communication, language and literacy. This is because of the daily phonics lessons and the very effective use of drama, role-play and other opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills. The creative curriculum, allows children to explore scientific concepts and use ICT to investigate their environment. Consequently progress is also outstanding in knowledge and understanding of the world. The curriculum is well planned and takes account of the requirements of the EYFS and the interests and needs of each child. Resources for outdoor play are good and used effectively to promote all areas of learning. Assessment is thorough and includes regular, focused observations of each child by each member of the team. Staff provide good support for children with additional learning needs and emotional problems. As a result they make good progress, particularly in the area of emotional development. By the time they left the EYFS last year, the vast majority of children were working at the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. The EYFS coordinator provides extremely clear and strong leadership.

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

- Set even more challenging academic targets to raise standards to higher levels.
- Ensure all teaching is at least good and much is outstanding.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils now make good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons. They reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6, impressive since they generally enter the school with well below average skills and levels of understanding. While achievement in the EYFS is excellent, between Year 2 and Year 6 in the past it has generally been satisfactory, reflecting variability in teaching. The school has now eliminated weak practice and established a high level of consistency, but the impact of this new, much improved quality has not had its full impact on raising standards. Unvalidated 2008 national tests indicate pupils make good progress between Key Stages 1 and 2. In Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils are on track to match existing targets for the next few years and sustain similar standards and progress. However, the school recognises it has now built the platform from which to pursue much even more ambitious goals. It is right to consider radically revising upwards its expectations for standards amongst future Year 6 pupils and seeking ways to establish achievement as 'outstanding'.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely happy at this school and are its best advocates. They are responsible, confident learners, with high self-esteem. Their good attitudes, skills and work habits of perseverance, independence and teamwork are promoted especially well by the school's 'Proud Initiative'. These, alongside their good basic skills, develop them positively for future learning and the world of work. They feel safe because they are exceptionally well cared for. Older pupils act as good role models, with some serving as class mentors or playground friends. Pupils are polite and very well behaved. They are good at supporting one another in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding and their cultural development good. Pupils show genuine respect for each other and are keen to learn about their own and other cultures. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community by representing their peers on the school council, playing for the school in sporting events and raising funds for local and national charities. They take advantage of good opportunities to eat healthily at school and many eagerly join in the range of out-of-school sporting events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good progress reflects the good and often outstanding quality of the teaching found throughout the school. Excellent relationships between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants play a key role. In the many successful lessons, pupils are actively involved in an exciting variety of activities. Learning benefits from creative topics and approaches, with a strong emphasis on practical activities and wide use of ICT. Teachers are good at focusing on developing literacy skills, particularly their speaking, listening and writing, in all subjects. They also challenge pupils and use assessments effectively to ensure work is well suited to different ability groups. Teaching assistants play a very effective role in supporting learning in lessons. Extra help for the most vulnerable children is effective and well coordinated. Pupils understand their learning targets and teachers provide them with suitable guidance on how to improve their work. However, whilst the use of self-assessment by pupils and peer assessment is developing in some classes, not all staff employ the strategy regularly.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with carefully planned schemes of work. Units in both key stages have been fully revised to give prominence to creativity, skill development and the reinforcement of literacy. The curriculum supports lesson planning well, ensuring suitable challenge for the most able and extra help for those who need it. It also prompts staff to build lessons around active participation by pupils. The school is beginning to develop opportunities in its easily accessed grounds for outdoor learning. Additional enrichment of the curriculum is offered through alternative activities such as sculpture, tap-dancing and cookery. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided outside teaching time, including music, gardening and drama, with sport prominent. These are key factors in pupils' considerable enjoyment of learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding care provided is based on good relationships between pupils and staff and very effective communication with parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child protection are rigorous and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. There are excellent arrangements for preventing and dealing with incidents of bullying or harassment. Pupils' extremely diverse needs are identified promptly and very effective support structures are in place to meet learning, emotional and pastoral needs quickly. Highly skilled support staff meet the needs of the most vulnerable very well, making an extremely effective contribution to those pupils' emotional and personal development. Academic guidance is good, based on effective assessment. Pupils know how well they are doing through regular feedback and marking of work. Although all pupils have medium-term personal targets in literacy and numeracy, the inclusion and use of these in daily lessons is sometimes inconsistent.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

This school continues to improve because the headteacher sets high expectations and has an outstanding ability to encourage others to share his vision. A very strong sense of common purpose pervades the school. Now that other leaders, some newly in post, are also effective, the school's combined scope for making further improvement is excellent. The governing body contributes well to leadership and management. They are extremely well informed and have a good impact on its performance. Monitoring is very thorough and it gives a very accurate picture of the quality of the school's work. Self-evaluation builds on this: it is reliable and challenging but realistic. Improvement since the last inspection has been very significant and the school is aware that it has the capacity to establish even better achievement and raise standards so they exceed national ones.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## 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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herbert Strutt Primary School, Belper, DE56 1SH

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school last week. Your considerable pride in the school was obvious to us. You are right to be so positive because it is a good school and does some things exceptionally well.

We were especially impressed with:

- your excellent behaviour
- the way the school helps you mature and become extremely confident
- the outstanding work done in the Reception class
- outstanding teaching in several classes
- the headteacher's excellent skills in leading and inspiring staff and pupils
- the good progress you make in your subjects
- the rich variety of interesting topics you study and the after-school activities on offer, especially in sport.

In order for your school to become even more successful we have asked the adults to help by making sure:

- your standards rise further, so they are higher than those in most other schools
- you make good progress in every one of your lessons and even more of them are excellent.

You can help by continuing to learn to try and improve your own work. Best wishes for the rest of your time at Herbert Strutt.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector