

Hemyock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113097
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311106
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	David Edwards HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Harrison
Headteacher	Gill Peters
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Parklands Hemyock Cullompton EX15 3RY
Telephone number	01823 680240
Fax number	01823 680657

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the village of Hemyock and the surrounding rural area. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations. An increasing number of children join at times other than in the Reception class. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin, with none in the early stages of learning English. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, and the figure is well below the national average. There is a small minority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hemyock is an improving school and provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has gone through a period of instability which had a negative impact on standards. The school also underwent significant changes of teaching staff but this situation has stabilised. The school is now settled and has begun to focus earnestly on raising pupils' achievement and standards, which have fallen significantly in recent years.

With some variations in the rates by which pupils' learn, achievement overall is satisfactory and standards broadly average. Improvements in performance, particularly for pupils currently in year 6 reflect the strong, recently established partnership between the headteacher, the newly appointed deputy headteacher and the local authority. Together they are working effectively to implement the changes and improvements that are essential to secure the school's future success. Governors are better informed by the headteacher and as a result are able to monitor progress and challenge where necessary. Significant improvements have been introduced to the way the school assesses pupils' progress and achievements. This now happens regularly, and targets for literacy and numeracy are set for each year group. There is still much to do in making these targets more personal for individuals so that all pupils, particularly the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the appropriate challenge to achieve as well as they can. Teaching is satisfactory. Some is of a good standard, but this is not consistently the case across the school, particularly in Key Stage 2. Senior leaders know exactly where improvements need to be made and are active in supporting staff to achieve this. A good start has been made on reviewing the curriculum and this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Support staff are skilled but not always deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. Cross-curricular links between the different subjects have yet to be identified in order to provide all pupils with more meaningful learning experiences and enjoyment of lessons. Pupils are happy to be in school and feel safe, which is helping them to learn. However, they say they would like more opportunities to be creative and make things! They like the recently introduced interactive whiteboards and that the school has its own swimming pool. Parents are appreciative of the steps taken in the past year to improve communication, develop after-school activities and address standards of behaviour within the school. Attendance remains good and pupils' behaviour is now also good. Teachers know their pupils and families well, which provides a firm foundation for the good care provided by the school. A comprehensive personal, social and health education programme has been successfully introduced throughout the school and this is effectively supporting pupils' behaviour, achievements and well-being. The pupils' multicultural understanding and awareness, however, is unsatisfactory and is not suitably covered in teachers' planning. The good communication between senior leaders, governors and the local authority has yet to be extended to the middle leaders of the school. At present, responsibilities are not distributed equitably amongst teachers to ensure that the effective monitoring and development of the curriculum will raise standards of achievement further. The sharply focused school improvement plan, carefully monitored by the governing body and the local authority, addresses this area as a priority.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children settle very quickly into school and are able to follow routines and become independent learners. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and, by the end

of Foundation Stage, reach broadly average standards, although writing remains a weak area. Many children have good language skills and are able to express their views effectively. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with strengths in relationships and high expectations of behaviour and attainment. Planning is satisfactory but the use of planning sheets for literacy and numeracy restricts linking all the areas of learning together, in order to provide a stimulating Foundation Stage curriculum. The children have use of a courtyard for physical development activities but outside areas to enable children to make the most of their learning are underdeveloped.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment data and marking of pupils' work more effectively to personalise individual targets so that all pupils, particularly the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Strengthen the curriculum to ensure more creativity in linking of subjects and the robust promotion of multicultural awareness.
- Develop the accountability of middle managers in monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Develop an outdoor area that will enhance the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

A small proportion of 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

Achievement overall is satisfactory. There is considerable variation in children's attainment on entry to the school, due to the relatively small numbers of children in each year, but over time it is broadly in line with expectations and children make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the 2007 Year 2 tests, pupils achieved average standards. Similarly, in the current Year 2, standards are broadly average, although improved teaching means that pupils' are now making good progress from their starting points. The Year 6 results in 2007 were well above average in English but mathematics and science continued the trend of recent years in remaining well below average. The school's assessment information indicates accelerated progress for pupils currently in Year 6 with standards that are now above average in English, mathematics and science. The school's recent strategies for tackling underachievement mean that pupils in Years 1 and 5 are now making better progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in mathematics in Year 3, however, is less strong. The school knows that improving the pace of learning, which is satisfactory overall, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are more able is a priority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and eager to talk to visitors. Older pupils enjoy having additional responsibilities such as being monitors or members of the school council, and have considerable responsibilities for ensuring that new children settle quickly into the school through an effective and popular 'Buddy' system. Pupils regularly raise money for a range of charities and are involved in local events. Recently, pupils took part in an arts project and produced a floor sculpture at a local forest. Pupils' enjoyment of school is satisfactory but some feel they are not challenged enough in lessons. Pupils have a satisfactory

understanding of the importance of staying healthy and they feel safe in school. They are confident that any issues are dealt with promptly. Spiritual, social and moral development is satisfactory because the school has effectively implemented a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme. However, pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory because pupils are not prepared sufficiently for living in multicultural Britain. Workplace and other skills such as citizenship are developed satisfactorily, particularly through teambuilding activities on residential and local challenges.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships and behaviour management are strengths of the satisfactory teaching, which has provided an improved climate for learning in the school. Planning has also improved but the learning intentions are not always clearly focused. In some classes, pupils are often reminded to be 'good learners' and 'good listeners' and this impacts well on their learning. Some teachers use 'talking partners' effectively to allow pupils to discuss aspects of their learning. Good use of praise, along with stimulating activities, supports pupils' learning well. For example, pupils' vocabulary was extended effectively when they were given a challenge to investigate what happens when sponges are dipped in water. However, in some classes, expectations are not sufficiently high to take account of the different ages or abilities of pupils in the class. As a result, some pupils are not challenged enough and their progress is not as good as it could be. New assessment procedures, recently introduced, are beginning to have an impact on raising standards. The school now collects and analyses progress data regularly, but it neither uses the information well enough to ensure that all pupils make the best progress they can, nor effectively enough to identify and provide for pupils who may require some short-term support. The skills of teaching assistants to support all learners have yet to be fully utilised by teachers. Marking is inconsistent and does not always meet the needs of individuals. Too few written comments tell pupils how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A comprehensive personal, social and health education programme has recently been embedded into the curriculum and this is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The curriculum covers all subjects and there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, which has improved recently and is beginning to impact positively on raising standards. There is still much to be done, particularly in providing a personalised curriculum that is tailored to meet the differing needs of pupils, and especially the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties. Cross-curricular links have not been clearly identified and the timetable has not been adapted to provide a more creative and multicultural approach to learning. Multicultural awareness is not taught adequately so pupils do not have a satisfactory understanding of the diversity of British culture. The curriculum is satisfactorily enhanced by a range of clubs and visits, including a residential visit for older pupils, and visitors to school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff are conscientious in their care of pupils and know them well. Consequently, pupils have confidence in the staff and feel free to approach them for advice and help. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is now good as a result of consistent and effective monitoring by staff. Formal arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are satisfactory and meet requirements. Attendance figures are monitored regularly to ensure they remain above the national average. The good relationships between all members of the school community are an important aspect of pupils' personal development. Academic guidance has yet to be developed to a good standard that will provide all pupils with personalised targets and guidance. Likewise, support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is only satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In recent months, the school's leaders, working in close partnership with the local authority, have begun to address the issues around the underachievement and slow progress of many pupils in the school. This has empowered the headteacher to be more decisive in driving ahead school improvements. Along with the excellent support of the recently appointed deputy headteacher, the headteacher now has a clearer vision of what needs to be done to secure high standards of achievement. These initiatives are still at an early stage of development and the school correctly identifies as an area for improvement, the development of the role of middle leaders in monitoring teaching and developing the curriculum in order to promote high quality care and education. Changes to the way teachers plan and are held accountable are also ensuring that the work of the school is firmly focused on school improvement. Administrative staff play a vital role in the smooth running of the school and are appreciated by parents, who confirm that the school has a warm and caring atmosphere. Governors are now better informed about how well the school is doing. They are beginning to ask leaders questions that are more challenging, and this has given them a strategic understanding of how to ensure the school's future success. This current steady improvement in the leadership of the school, along with the effective challenge from the local authority, is ensuring that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hemyock Primary School, Cullompton EX15 3RY

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and especially valued the opportunities we had to talk with some of you and see you in your lessons. In return, I want to tell you what we thought of your school. We have decided yours is a satisfactory school. This means although there are some good things to celebrate, there are some important areas that we would like your school to improve. First, here are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school. When you start school in the Foundation Stage, you settle well. This is in part because of the very good 'Buddy' system you have in place. Well done! All the adults in your school know you and your families well. You know how to keep safe and make sensible healthy choices when eating. You are caring towards one another and think it is important to help others in need, through, for example, your support of charities. Your behaviour in lessons and out of school is good. You have lots of after-school activities, which you say you enjoy. You make satisfactory progress in your work and there are some pleasing improvements in the standards some of you are reaching for example those of you currently in Year 6. .

We have asked your headteacher to think about ways she could make Hemyock School even better for you. In particular, we would like her to:

- use assessment data and marking more effectively to personalise individual targets for you, so that you will all be able to achieve even higher standards;
- ensure the curriculum is more exciting, with plenty of opportunities for you to investigate and make things, and to know more about multicultural Britain;
- help all your teachers in monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school;
- develop an exciting outdoor area for the youngest children in the Reception class so they can learn more through playing outside.

I am sure that if you continue to hold such positive attitudes to your work, like those you showed us when we visited your school, then you will go on to achieve very well in the future.

With very best wishes

David Edwards Her Majesty's Inspector