

Hampton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118360
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312908
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

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	531
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Clowes
Headteacher	John White
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Fitzgerald Avenue Herne Bay CT6 8NB
Telephone number	01227 372159
Fax number	01227 741549

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hampton Primary School is larger than average. The great majority of pupils come from a White British background and only a very small number do not have English as their first language. Although there are largely equal numbers of boys and girls in the school, some year groups have particularly higher numbers of one gender or another. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have statements of special need, is above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties and a small number have physical disabilities. The headteacher has been in post for only a few weeks.

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 school. There are some good features, such as the very caring, inclusive atmosphere and the way pupils' personal development and well-being are nurtured. Pupils also benefit from the extensive enrichment activities available to them and the good partnerships that are in place with other schools, outside agencies and parents who have very positive views of the school. The new headteacher is already held in high regard by staff, governors, pupils and parents, one of whom commented on the 'seamless' change in leadership.

Children make good progress when they start in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. However, since they come into school with skills and knowledge below what would be expected of children their age, by the time they enter Year 1 they are broadly average. Their reading and writing skills, however, tend to be lower than in other areas of learning, and this picture continues through the school. Results in 2007 show that at the end of Year 2, pupils achieved standards that were above average, with mathematics being the strongest subject. Results in 2008 are likely to paint a similar picture. From Years 3 to 6, however, pupils make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in mathematics and science, but do not make enough progress in their reading and writing, as evidenced by the results in 2007. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory. There are signs that current Year 6 pupils are making slightly better progress but the numbers expected to reach the higher levels, especially in writing are still too low.

The quality of teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. However, there are pockets of good and outstanding teaching in several areas. The challenge now for the school is to broaden this so that, for example, all teachers are using day-to-day assessment rigorously and involving pupils in thinking about what they have learned, as well as guiding them in how to improve. This is especially the case for English and for the more able. The curriculum has been developed to be more creative and this has added to the enjoyment of pupils. However, the development of key literacy skills has not been a high enough focus until recently.

Pupils' personal development is a strength and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. They behave well and have high levels of respect for others and, in the wider world, a good understanding of other cultures. Preparation for the next stage in their learning is satisfactory. Attendance levels, whilst satisfactory, are affected to some extent by parents removing their children for holidays, a practice the school is trying to reduce. Pastoral care is very strong and the school has ensured that the particular needs of some pupils are very well catered for. The building and other resources are suitable for pupils with physical disabilities so that they are as fully included as possible.

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. They are good in the Foundation Stage. The new headteacher is already aware of the need to raise achievement and standards in English although there has not been enough time for initiatives to have had a strong impact. Some middle managers are still developing their roles but are doing so with enthusiasm and a joint sense of purpose to raise standards. Governors are very knowledgeable and play an active role in supporting and challenging the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into school with particularly low reading, writing and personal, social and emotional development. They get off to a flying start, however, and make good progress whatever their level of ability. The strengths in the Reception classes are the good leadership and management and the way the teachers plan together. This ensures the well-structured curriculum is suitably balanced, giving children the chance to choose their own activities, but guiding them to different ones where necessary. Children love the activities relating to science week such as experimenting with how to make things move and mixing liquids with solids to make very gooey messes! They are beginning to record their findings and talk about being 'scientists'. Relationships are very strong, both amongst adults and children and between the children. Children are very well cared for and so have a great deal of confidence in adults. This greatly enhances their enjoyment of school and they learn well through play that is observed and supported by very experienced teaching assistants as well as the class teachers. The well-resourced outdoor area is used to good effect although there is still scope to develop this further to include more suitable climbing equipment and an area for growing plants to further improve children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, especially in Years 3 to 6 and for the more able.
- Improve teaching by ensuring the good practice seen is more consistent across the school and caters for the needs of all abilities with suitably challenging work, especially in English.
- Develop academic guidance for pupils to provide well-targeted support for all, including the more able, to ensure they progress as well as they can.

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

Standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. A recent focus on improving standards and achievement in mathematics has had a positive impact across the school, with pupils achieving above the national average for the higher levels in the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2007. This picture is being maintained in 2008. Science is also a particular strength throughout the school, with much investigative work capturing pupils' imagination and impacting on standards. English, however, has been a relatively weak area for a number of years in the standards pupils reach and the progress they make from Year 3 to Year 6. The school is now addressing the problem. There is a greater focus on developing key skills such as reading comprehension and phonics, and on improving writing by focusing more on punctuation and giving more opportunities to write longer pieces of work in other subjects. There is some evidence of improvement in progress, especially in reading. However, pupils' writing skills, especially at the end of Year 6, are still below national averages, particularly in relation to those achieving the higher level. Their progress, whilst improving, is not good enough especially for the more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily overall as they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school. One pupil wrote in a design for the school brochure: 'We are a happy school and you are welcome here' and this is reflected in their attitudes to each other and to their work. Pupils especially enjoy school when lessons are fun and when they can get involved in 'hands-on' work. This has an impact on their learning, as can be seen from the good progress in science. Behaviour is good throughout the school, with even the youngest children meeting the high expectations of staff. They feel that any bullying is taken care of by staff, and feel, as one pupil stated, that 'nothing needs to be changed. The teachers are really kind and look after us'. Pupils also look after each other through the playtime friends' scheme of Yellow and Red Hats and Bibs.

Pupils are aware of the importance of being healthy, as evidenced by the recent award of the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award. They benefit from after-school sports clubs and a Healthy Snack Bar. The school council played an active role in improving the school meals so that much healthier options are available and this raised the numbers having a hot meal. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to stay safe; for example, they are very clear about safe usage of internet 'chat rooms'.

There are good links with the local community through pupils raising funds for charities and getting involved in local events and with Age Concern.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and is improving. Some good and outstanding teaching seen during the inspection confirms this. Lessons are well planned, ensure that time is not wasted and usually offer opportunities for pupils to work alone and in groups. Pupils particularly enjoy the investigations they do in science, such as how to design and construct a more efficient egg-box, and their achievement reflects this. Links between subjects help to engage pupils' interest, but the standard of the writing they produce is not always challenged and this slows their progress. In addition, in some lessons, more able pupils are not sufficiently stretched. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this leads to good behaviour. Marking and target-setting, although in place, are not consistently sharp enough to move pupils' learning on quickly, especially in literacy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The strong focus on linking learning between subjects is proving successful in heightening pupils' interest in and improving their learning. Topics are wide-ranging and many especially appeal to boys, such as 'Space' and 'Pirates'. However, the impact on pupils' literacy skills has not been monitored rigorously enough until recently. The new information and communication technology (ICT) suite and interactive whiteboards in each class have improved opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the use of new technology and make lessons more enjoyable. The variety of clubs on offer to all classes is much appreciated and there is competition for places, especially for the cooking club! All pupils enjoy visits that are linked to their learning

and older pupils learn new skills such as teamwork on residential stays. Other projects, such as the Build a Car competition, also enrich the curriculum.

The libraries, in particular the one used by older pupils, are inadequate and prevent pupils from developing the research skills and love of books that would help them in later life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school rightly prides itself on being very inclusive and welcoming. Pupils recognise the kindness and caring attitudes of all staff who, despite the size of the school, know pupils well. Additional support from very well trained teaching assistants, the Family Liaison Officer and outside agencies when needed ensures that pupils with particular physical, educational or social needs are very well supported and looked after. As a result, pupils feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Good procedures are in place to safeguard children and for child protection and health and safety.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Tracking and assessment data is in place and in use but it has not always been used effectively to identify and rectify under-achievement, particularly in English. Pupils are aware of their targets but there is a lack of consistency in how well they are used to ensure they understand what they need to do to improve and make as much progress as possible. This is especially the case for more able pupils in English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has only been in post a matter of weeks but has already identified the main issues for the school, especially in relation to achievement and standards in English. He has clear ideas for improvement and raising standards and is beginning to manage change in a sensitive manner. However, there has not yet been enough time for this to impact on achievement, especially in English and challenging the more able.

The roles of other levels of management are being reviewed and subject leaders are now more empowered to lead their subjects. This has had an impact on mathematics and science but is only beginning to have an impact in English. Monitoring of teaching, and particularly learning, has not been rigorous enough to ensure standards and achievement improve in English.

Governors are knowledgeable and very supportive. They have challenged the school on achievement and standards and play an active role in development planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is now sound. This, coupled with signs of improvement in achievement and standards, gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	2
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?	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	3
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?	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	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hampton Primary School, Herne Bay CT6 8NB

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming in to lessons and assembly and having a chat with you about your school. We think your school is a satisfactory one. Your progress in mathematics and science is often good, but in English it is not as good as it should be.

Here are some of the things we like most about your school:

- You enjoy school and feel safe and secure because the adults look after you very well. There is not really anything you would like to change and your parents are very happy with the school too.
- You have many opportunities to do fun things like cooking and gardening and sports clubs and you particularly like it when you do 'hands-on' lessons like in science.
- You generally behave well. You have a really good understanding of how to stay healthy, helped by the Fit Kids gymnast! You enjoy the healthy food at playtime and lunchtime.

This is what we have asked the school to do next:

- Improve your skills in English, especially for the older pupils and for those who are capable of doing more difficult work.
- Make sure that in all lessons, teachers check that everyone is working as hard as they can whatever their ability.
- Make more use of your targets and how well you think you have done in lessons to help you understand how you could do even better, especially in English.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and behave well. Thank you again for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Lindsay Lead Inspector

13 June 2008

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Lead Inspector