

# Hartley Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 118481      |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Kent        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 312957      |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 1 July 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mike Capper |

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                                    | 391  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                               |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Naomi Narramore                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Lorraine Hollingworth                            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 17 January 2005                                  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Round Ash Way<br>Hartley<br>Longfield<br>DA3 8BT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01474 702742                                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01474 708072                                     |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the impact of the new leadership team on improving provision in the Foundation Stage and developing the curriculum across the school;

progress and standards, especially in science;

the use of assessment for learning and how well teachers meet differing needs;

the effect of personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision on pupils' personal development;

the role of subject leaders.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Most pupils in this larger than average primary school come from the local community. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is broadly average.

The headteacher took up post in September 2006, with the deputy headteacher starting a year later. There have been many recent changes in teaching staff, with five newly qualified teachers starting in this academic year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is improving quickly under the strong direction of the headteacher, governors and other senior leaders. Their strong commitment to further improvement is reflected in very thorough development planning that is based on good systems for checking how well the school is doing. This means that there is a realistic picture of overall school effectiveness and a good awareness that more remains to be done to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Parents are very positive about changes over the last two years, with one summing up their view by writing, 'The new headteacher has greatly improved the school in many ways'.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) where progress is good. Standards are above average by the start of Year 1 and these are maintained through to the end of Year 6, reflecting satisfactory progress for most of the years that pupils are in the school. Pupils make the slowest progress in science, where there is an overuse of worksheets and an occasional lack of challenge in some lessons. Senior leaders are aware that good practice in science in Year 6 is not yet strongly evident elsewhere. They have already identified this as an area for development and have well-considered plans to improve things. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, especially in literacy, because they are supported well by skilled teaching assistants. In addition, excellent links with outside agencies mean that pupils who are having problems are given extra help very quickly.

Thorough monitoring and support from senior leaders have resulted in improved teaching and this is why pupils' progress is picking up. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are good features across the school. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and they make learning interesting through the good use of resources, including interactive whiteboards. Teachers plan carefully for lessons, but do not always make enough use of information about pupils' progress to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for all, especially in science. A recent focus on improving academic support means that pupils are clear about how they can improve. Teachers are conscientious about marking work, although practice is not yet consistently good in all subjects. Newly qualified teachers have been supported well and their enthusiasm adds a lot to the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils are well cared for and supported and this ensures that their personal development and well-being are good. As one pupil rightly commented, 'There is always someone to talk to if we have a worry'. Pupils are polite and courteous and behave well. They are enthusiastic in lessons and work hard. Rates of attendance are broadly average because some parents take their children on holiday in term time despite the school actively discouraging this. Nevertheless, pupils greatly enjoy school and are very happy. As one rightly said, 'School is fun!' Pupils especially like their residential visits where they learn to live together and to try out new skills such as canoeing and abseiling. Pupils very enthusiastically take responsibility and this helps them to make a good contribution to the community. The hardworking school council gives pupils a good voice and contributes greatly to school development. Pupils learn to manage budgets when deciding how to spend their 'class allocation' and they show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity. Activities such as these, as well as their good confidence and self-esteem, ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

In the last year, the school has made a good start to improving the satisfactory curriculum by developing closer links between subjects so that learning is made more purposeful. However, in science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their generally good scientific

knowledge to practical applications such as the planning and carrying out of investigations. Provision for PSHE is well planned, ensuring that pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. For example, visits from the emergency services help pupils to learn about dangers such as substance abuse that they may meet as they get older. Even younger pupils are clear about why fruit and regular exercise are good for them and they usually make healthy choices at lunchtime.

The school is well led and managed. New appointments in the last year have helped the headteacher to build a strong team of senior leaders who are doing the right things to improve the school further. There have been many recent initiatives. These are already beginning to have a positive effect on learning and they demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been significantly extended and are being used well to set challenging targets and to identify those who need additional support. Both the curriculum and provision for children in the Foundation Stage are also much improved.

Governors provide good challenge and check that good value is achieved from spending by ensuring that it is tightly focused on raising standards. The carefully considered deployment of staff and other resources has been an important factor in recent improvements. Subject leadership is developing well but is currently stronger in English and mathematics than it is in other subjects. This is because there has been a recent focus on improving progress in these subjects. In other subjects, leaders do not yet have enough opportunity to visit lessons to check on teaching and learning for themselves so that areas for development can be identified quickly and included in action planning.

There is a very strong partnership between home and school. Parents hold the school in very high regard, typically saying things like 'the new headteacher does not put up with any nonsense and that is great for everyone' and 'there is a lovely atmosphere and children get on together very well'. Comments such as these successfully capture the main strengths of this rapidly improving school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well because teaching is good, they are well cared for and there is a good curriculum that includes an exciting range of activities both indoors and outdoors. Consequently, from starting points that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, standards rise to above average levels by the start of Year 1. Children make especially good progress in developing early writing skills because there are many opportunities to write throughout the school day. For example, as 'archaeologists', children use metal detectors to locate treasure and then write brief reports on their finds. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere throughout the day. Children are given good support by adults, although there are occasionally missed opportunities to extend learning when they are working independently. Provision is well led and managed. In the current year, leaders are making increasingly good use of information about children's progress to set targets for children to reach in Year 1 and Year 2.

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

- Make less use of worksheets in science and give pupils more opportunities to plan and carry out scientific investigations.
- Ensure that teachers always pitch work at the right level for all pupils, especially in science.

- Strengthen monitoring by leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that areas for development are quickly identified and tackled.

A small proportion of the 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.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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?   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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                              | 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   | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |

### 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?   | 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                     | 3   |
| 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  |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hartley Primary School, Longfield DA3 8BT

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for showing me your work. You were very polite and friendly. I found that at the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education, although it is improving quickly because of the good work of your headteacher, staff and governors.

Some of the things I found out about your school

- You make good progress in the Reception Year and quickly learn many new things. Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress in the rest of the school.
- You behave well, greatly enjoy school and take responsibility very sensibly. I was particularly impressed with the way that the school council is helping to improve things.
- Adults are very kind and caring and they look after you well. Targets are helping you to understand how to improve your work.
- You are taught all the subjects you should be. The school successfully teaches you about the importance of staying safe and healthy and there are lots of interesting clubs, visits and visitors. The residential visits sound great!
- The headteacher, other members of staff and governors are leading the school well and they are taking the right steps to help you learn even more quickly.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Help you to learn more quickly in science by giving you more opportunities to plan and carry out investigations and making less use of worksheets in lessons.
- Make sure that teachers always give you work that is not too easy or too hard for you, especially in science.
- Give teachers who are in charge of subjects more opportunities to check on your work so that any areas needing improvement can be identified and tackled.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn, and I wish you well for the future. You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard at all times. I hope that the Year 6 music and drama performance goes well and you all enjoy taking part.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead Inspector