

Hall Orchard Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120112
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313522
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francis Acton
Headteacher	Jane McKay
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Church Street Barrow-upon-Soar Loughborough LE12 8HP
Telephone number	01509 412188
Fax number	01509 620960

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Pupils come from mainly White British backgrounds and a smaller than average percentage are entitled to free school meals. All pupils speak English as their first language and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is low. Children enter school at the age of four years, most having attended a local playgroup.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Standards are broadly average and rising and achievement is satisfactory and improving. The school's focus on improving teaching is having a positive impact and, although there is still some way to go, teaching is now satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. In some year groups, pupils often make good progress although the most able pupils' achievement is not as good as it should be. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well throughout the school. Parents are generally happy with the teaching and the progress their children make.

Improvements are being driven successfully by the headteacher, with support from staff. She has a clear view of how the school should improve and has set plans in motion to ensure faster progress by pupils. However, the skill of others in responsibility positions in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and in supporting improvement is mixed. This has slowed the pace of progress a little. Nevertheless, all staff are committed to ensuring standards rise and the capacity for further improvement is sound.

Teaching varies between classes but most lessons are well organised and planned with good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Occasionally the pace of work is a little slow and sometimes work is not matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs, especially for the most able. This is because assessment information is not always used accurately enough to plan work for pupils or to set them challenging enough targets. Support for pupils needing help with literacy and numeracy is good and contributes effectively to these pupils' good progress. There is a wide range of activities that enrich pupils' experiences, but not always enough to stretch the most able pupils, for example to work independently or to conduct investigations in science. The wide range of out-of-school activities are well supported and enjoyed by pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strength and pupils' grasp of the importance of healthy lifestyles, and their commitment to healthy eating and physical exercise is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, attend well, willingly take on responsibilities and are ready to help those less fortunate than themselves. They behave well and safely. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Safeguarding procedures are secure, and staff and governors work hard to maintain and improve these and respond positively to parents' concerns. Academic guidance is satisfactory and pupils like having targets to work to, even though a few parents are not so sure about them!

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with slightly lower than expected skills. By the time they go into Year 1, their skills are broadly as expected for their age and above this in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall they make satisfactory progress. Children's progress is best in personal, social and emotional development but a little slower in the development of writing and mathematical skills. The school knows this and is working hard to improve children's skills in these areas. Children enjoy the variety of learning activities and the school is increasingly providing more free choice and opportunities for children to develop independence. There is a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities and free-flow between them. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and support their personal development well. Assessment is used well to

identify children's starting points, but not as rigorously to plan challenging activities to speed up their progress. Staff work well with parents, ensuring children settle readily to school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress by making sure work is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve teaching by making sure teachers use assessment information to ensure work is consistently matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Increase the pace of improvement by ensuring all senior and middle managers are rigorous in evaluating provision and implementing changes for the better. 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are rising throughout the school and are broadly average. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. The school's improved assessment and tracking procedures have highlighted previous underachievement, which had impeded pupils' progress. The school is slowly overcoming this and in some lessons pupils now make good progress. The most able pupils, who have not done as well as others in recent years, are starting to do better, most noticeably in Years 2 and 6. Elsewhere the progress of the most able is patchy, mainly because work is not always matched to their learning needs or does not provide enough opportunities for them to learn independently. However, efforts to improve literacy are having a positive impact. Pupils speak confidently, and reading skills are broadly average and improving. Pupils who have difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills and who have support make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitudes and the readiness with which they join in activities. They behave safely in and around school. Pupils have a first-rate grasp of the importance of healthy eating and engage diligently in physical activities and games. Their understanding of the changes in their bodies as they grow is excellent. Pupils contribute effectively to the school and wider community. They voice their opinions confidently and participate enthusiastically in the school council. They are proud of their influence in improving the school's environment, such as the provision of outdoor equipment and refurbishment of toilets. In the community, pupils participate in a wide range of activities and raise funds to support those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils feel valued and are confident in asking for help when they need it. Their good social skills and sound academic skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their understanding of the beliefs and values of other cultures is particularly well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships are good and teachers successfully encourage pupils' positive interest and engagement in lessons. Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well, through effective questioning and by providing a good range of activities that encourage discussion. Pupils work well together and show confidence in exploring their ideas through 'talking partners'. Occasionally, assessment information is not used to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially the most able. In these lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. In a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slow. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils who need extra help in learning or managing their behaviour. Marking, which is often good, varies and occasionally does not provide guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

All subjects are adequately covered and there are good opportunities to learn a foreign language. Pupils enjoy the wide range of out-of-school and enrichment activities the school provides, such as orienteering and visits to other schools. These activities enhance learning in other subjects and promote physical fitness and cultural development. Occasionally, work is not planned well enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should make, especially the most able. For example, investigative work in science is sometimes too rigidly organised, limiting how well pupils learn for themselves. Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory and improving, but is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects. Provision for pupils who have extra support in English and mathematics is good and contributes to the good progress they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff value and respect pupils' feelings and opinions and pupils trust and have confidence in all adults they have contact with. This is a significant factor in pupils' good personal development. Staff have a good understanding of procedures for child protection. They support vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties sensitively. Health and safety procedures are in place and are secure, and the school works hard to ensure the school site remains safe. The school has established effective relationships with outside agencies and seeks their support whenever needed. Academic guidance is now sound. The tracking of pupils' progress has improved and so teachers now find it easier to spot any underachievement by groups or individuals. Assessment information is beginning to be used more effectively to set targets for pupils. Pupils generally know their targets and how to achieve them, but occasionally they are not challenging enough for the most able, and some pupils know this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides very strong direction for the school's improvement and has united the staff team in the drive to raise standards. Her evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. However, some of the others in positions of responsibility do not have very developed evaluation and leadership skills, and so the pace of change has been a little slow. For example, the evaluation of teaching by some staff is too generous, and the implementation of assessment to guide the planning of teaching is not firmly established. However, the school's provision is improving and this has had a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievement. Governance is good. Governors set challenging targets and have made their expectations clear. They support the headteacher and staff and are actively involved in planning improvements. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully dealt with.

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	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	1
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Hall Orchard Church of England Primary School, Barrow-upon-Soar LE12 8HP

Thank you for making the time we spent with you so enjoyable. We spoke to many of you in meetings, in lessons and around school, and the comments you made were really helpful.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- Your progress is satisfactory and improving and you reach about average standards. Those of you who find learning hard do well.
- You are at a satisfactory and improving school.
- Staff know what the school needs to do to make sure you make even better progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory right through the school and you enjoy the activities the school organises for you.
- You behave well, work together well and treat each other with consideration.
- You have excellent understanding about what you need to do to stay healthy. You eat healthily and enjoy physical exercise.
- You enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- The school is safe and everyone works hard to keep it that way.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- help you make faster progress by making sure work is challenging enough for all of you
- make sure that the information teachers have about you is used to plan work in lessons to help you learn well
- make sure all staff know how to check on how good the school is so that they can help it improve even faster.

You can help by saying when you think work is a bit too easy for you!

With best wishes

Ted Wheatley Lead inspector