

Hempnall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120815
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313750
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	87
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	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachael Hyde-Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Miriam Elston
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Street Hempnall Norwich Norfolk NR15 2AD
Telephone number	01508499264
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hempnall Primary School provides for pupils from the village of Hempnall and smaller neighbouring villages. Prior to 2007, it was a first school. Since then, it has expanded to cater for the whole primary age range. This the first year the school has had Year 6 pupils. The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic communities and no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception year is typical for children's age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hempnall Primary School is a good school and is well regarded in the community. Despite limitations to the premises and expanding numbers, its transition from being a first school to a primary school has proceeded smoothly. Governance is very strong and both staff and governors planned carefully for the change in school status.

Pupils throughout the school make good progress in relation to their starting points. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen steadily over the past three years and are consistently above the national average. This is because pupils in Key Stage 1, and especially in Year 2, are well taught. They enjoy their education and are keen to learn. Pupils do so well in reading because phonics is taught every day. Writing standards have improved considerably because there has been a strong focus on giving pupils opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences in subjects other than literacy.

In Key Stage 2, the school's own data indicates that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Higher attaining pupils do well because tasks are well matched to their needs. Lower attaining pupils receive high quality support from teaching assistants and make good progress. Overall, teaching is good. However, there is scope for teachers to be more consistent in their marking in order to ensure that pupils always receive good advice on how to improve their work.

This is an inclusive, happy school in which pupils' personal development is good. Parents confirm that their children enjoy being there. The school is rightly proud of its family atmosphere. There is a good team spirit amongst staff and relationships between adults and pupils are very good. The school is well led by the headteacher and governors. The headteacher has a secure understanding of strengths and areas for development because she takes the lead role in monitoring standards and in monitoring teaching and learning. Subject leaders, however, do not have the same overview of their subjects because they do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor standards and provision. This is restricting the part they play in leading subject development.

Planning for the future is a strength. The school has demonstrated that it responds efficiently and effectively to the outcomes of self-evaluation and inspection. Well-conceived plans have been drawn up to appoint a senior management team when the school enters into partnership with a neighbouring school in 2009. The school has a good track record of ongoing improvement and has a good capacity to improve further. It offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry is in line with national expectations in most areas of learning. The exception is their social skills, which are sometimes weaker. In lessons, they make satisfactory progress. By the end of the EYFS, the vast majority are working within the early learning goals.

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory with good elements. The children are taught in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class and benefit from learning in a small group. In particular, they have good opportunities to develop their communication skills through role-play and conversing one-to-one with adults. Phonics is taught well and is having a positive impact on developing children's reading skills. However, the class timetable is geared more towards the Year 1 curriculum and not enough emphasis is placed on planning learning through structured play in order to meet

the youngest children's needs. The outdoor area, which is adjacent to the classroom, is spacious but is not set up as imaginatively as it could be. Consequently, opportunities are lost to make maximum use of this space for learning and play.

The children are well cared for and happy. They enjoy school and want to learn. The welfare requirements are met. The EYFS is led satisfactorily. All adults working with the children know them well. However, staff are not routinely involved in assessing children's progress when working with individuals or groups and this is an area for development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in the EYFS to learn through structured play both inside and outside the classroom.
- Strengthen the roles of subject leaders so that they play a fuller part in the leadership and management of the school.
- Ensure that marking in every class is focused upon giving pupils helpful advice on how to improve the quality of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in relation to their starting points. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Standards of writing have improved considerably since the last inspection although boys do less well in writing than girls and the gap between boys' performance in writing and reading is wide. In 2008, the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in all subjects was above the 2007 national average; higher attaining pupils did especially well in reading. The attainment of pupils with additional learning needs is broadly in line with that of pupils in other schools.

National data on the performance of Hempnall pupils in Year 6 is not yet available because, until this year, the school has had no Year 6 pupils. However, the school's own assessment records indicate that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2; many, in this small school, make good progress. On scrutinising pupils' work, it is evident that the school has an accurate view of their progress. Year 6 pupils are on track to make the expected progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are well motivated to learn. They say that they feel safe. Behaviour is good in class and in the playground. Pupils are well aware of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle through taking physical exercise and eating healthily. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average.

A key strength is the pupils' enthusiasm to talk about their school and their plans to make the school more eco-friendly. They possess a good awareness of how to conserve energy and are keen to offer ideas and contribute to decision making. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make a positive contribution to the local community through participating in village events and inviting the community into school for concerts. Their awareness of global issues is also developing well as they become actively involved in a project

to provide footballs for children in Malawi. The pupils possess good basic skills, which prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is especially strong in Year 2. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They are keen to participate in discussion and feel secure in expressing their own points of view.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers know the pupils well and draw upon their knowledge of individual pupils' needs and interests to inform their planning. They continually assess pupils' learning informally during lessons and they also assess and record pupils' attainment more formally at regular intervals. This is a good initiative. The outcomes of these assessments are used effectively to programme intervention groups for those pupils at risk of falling behind. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with additional learning needs. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils have access to a broad curriculum. While a strong emphasis is placed on teaching literacy and numeracy every day, the school has made a good start on introducing a more creative approach to planning the curriculum through topics and themes. This approach is enabling pupils to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and particularly to improve their writing. Good attention is paid to programming personal, social and health education, and to environmental education. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, and by outside visits and visiting speakers. Community cohesion is promoted effectively, particularly at a local level. For example, pupils study their local area and learn a lot about how to contribute to community life.

The curriculum is extended effectively for higher attaining pupils. These pupils have good opportunities to participate in science and mathematics sessions run by staff from the local high school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for pastorally. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet government requirements. Pupils are well supervised in the playground. They receive good academic guidance in lessons, especially during literacy and numeracy where every class is supported by a teaching assistant. The quality of marking, however, is not as consistent throughout the school. Not all teachers give pupils sufficient focused feedback on how to improve the quality of their work. A good start has been made on setting targets for individual pupils although there is room for setting more challenging targets for some middle-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. The school has established very good links with external agencies to support pupils with a range of additional learning or disabilities.

Good links are being established with the neighbouring high school to ensure that the school's first Year 6 pupils will have a smooth transition to secondary education at the end of the academic year.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, and governance is very strong. Governors achieve a good balance between being supportive and offering challenge. They know the school well. This is a small school where there is a good team ethos and where staff take on a range of subject responsibilities. However, their responsibilities as subject leaders are not so well defined, particularly their roles in monitoring standards, teaching and learning. At present, there are not enough opportunities for staff to share in the leadership. The school has acknowledged that this is an area for development. Plans to enter into partnership with a smaller neighbouring school are in hand. The school is well prepared for the new building project, which is programmed to start imminently.

The transition from being a first school to a primary school has proceeded smoothly due to careful planning by governors and staff. Although there are long-standing issues regarding the suitability of the premises, the school has not been deflected in its drive to raise standards. For example, there is firm evidence that standards in writing have improved. The school's self-evaluation of standards and provision is accurate. The current school improvement plan is a well-constructed document where priorities for action are linked closely to identified areas for development. Communication with parents is good.

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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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 learners' needs?	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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	1
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

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Hempnall Primary School, Norfolk NR15 2AD

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed talking to you all. Thank you, too, to the eco group for telling me about your exciting plans to become a more eco-friendly school. You are making really good progress with your recycling and energy-saving initiatives.

Your school is a good school. Your teachers plan lessons which are interesting and it is obvious that you enjoy school very much. During my visit, I spoke to your teachers, to Mrs Elston and to governors. I also looked at your work and was pleased to see you making good progress, especially in writing. Your teachers give you good opportunities to practise your writing in subjects other than English. I have suggested that when they mark your work, they try to give you more advice on how to improve your work even further.

It was good to see how well you care for each other and how well all the adults in the school care for you. Your school is set in lovely grounds and, while I know that you are all eagerly awaiting the new buildings, I have suggested that those of you in Reception use the outdoor area as much as possible to help you with your learning.

Mrs Elston and the governors lead the school well. Your teachers also have extra responsibilities in leading subjects and I have suggested that, to help them do this, they visit your classes more and look at your books, so that they also know how well all of you are doing.

I was very interested to hear about your 'Footballs for Malawi' project and hope you raise lots of money to buy lots of footballs.

Enjoy the rest of term.

Best wishes

Tricia Pritchard

Her Majesty's Inspector