

Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122824
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number	314417
Inspection dates	3-4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	53
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Lake
Headteacher	Miss Eleanor Greaves
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2004
School address	Common Road Huthwaite Sutton-in-ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 2JR
Telephone number	01623 459199
Fax number	01623 459199

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small infant school serving a former mining community close to the Nottinghamshire / Derbyshire border. The number of children eligible for free school meals is currently slightly above the national average as is the proportion with learning difficulties. The very large majority of children are of White British backgrounds with only a very small number speaking English as an additional language. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Gold Award.

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 school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is warm and welcoming. Parents appreciate the positive and caring start children get to their education. As one parent noted, the children are: 'happy, polite and very safe. All the staff are committed to the children during and after school hours'.

When children start school their skills, knowledge and understanding are often below those expected for this age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Many children have limited communication skills, often speaking in short phrases and simple words. In the Foundation Stage, most make satisfactory progress overall but good progress in their personal development. When they enter Year 1, while children often achieve some of the targets expected of them, their speaking, listening and early writing skills remain below average. Information from national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 shows that in recent years standards have often been above average. However, in the last two years standards have dipped, especially in writing. Across the subjects few children achieved the higher levels. Boys did much better than girls. Standards are currently broadly average. However, while boys and girls of all abilities make satisfactory overall progress, more could be achieved in their speaking and writing skills.

Children's personal development is good. Most enjoy school and the youngest children particularly enjoy outdoor activities. Many know how to stay safe at playtimes and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy exercise, but their packed lunches do not reflect healthy food choices. Children enjoy taking on responsibilities in school and are often eager to be chosen to help.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have good relationships with children and offer them lots of encouragement which builds their self-esteem. While teachers plan lessons satisfactorily, at times activities do not include sufficient opportunities for children to practise speaking and writing skills to a higher level in order to prepare them better for their future. The care, guidance and support of children is satisfactory. There are strengths in pastoral care and children know there are always adults available to help them if needed. Academic guidance is broadly satisfactory. The way in which staff collect information from tests and checks of children's progress is not always organised and systematic enough to ensure consistently good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and the school has recently improved the balance of child chosen and adult-lead activities in the Foundation Stage.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a deep commitment to the school and community. She works closely with staff, parents, governors and the local parish. The school recognises most of the areas for improvement but school self-evaluation is at times overly generous. The procedures to monitor the work of the school are satisfactory, although not always rigorously evaluative enough. Subject leaders have not developed their role sufficiently in identifying where further improvements are necessary. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable all children to speak and write with greater skill and confidence.
- Improve the way in which assessment information is organised and used to ensure the best level of challenge in teaching.

- Ensure that the monitoring of the work of the school involves all staff in rigorous evaluation of the next steps for improvement.

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

Children enter the school's pre-school group on a part-time basis in the summer term prior to admission to the Reception class. Early checks of their knowledge and understanding indicate skills that are below average, including in speaking, reading and writing. Many children have limited knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their local area. Their physical skills are often better and average overall. Children make satisfactory progress in the pre-school group and sometimes good progress in Reception, especially in their personal and social development. However, at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage, communication skills are often lower than those in other areas.

In Key Stage 1, children of all abilities and backgrounds achieve satisfactorily. At the age of seven, while many enjoy chatting with their friends, their speaking skills are often below average. The school works well with a range of external agencies, including speech therapy, in an attempt to build such skills. However, few children speak at length or develop an appropriate vocabulary for their age. This hinders their ability to write in depth and with detail and does not help them prepare well enough for their future. Reading skills are slightly better because children read on a regular basis in school and sometimes at home. Standards in mathematics have generally been slightly higher than in English because children are often more interested in solving problems. Children who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties do as well as their classmates. All children are treated equally and there appears no school based reason why boys do better than girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children usually enjoy daily acts of worship. Most behave well, although a small number sometimes struggle to behave in a mature enough way for their age. Children believe there is little bullying in school although a few are concerned by name calling and teasing by some of their classmates. Given the restricted space available, the school makes suitable provision for physical education. Children say they like these activities and look forward to the forthcoming sports festival. They enjoy the healthy school lunches and 'fruitful' snacks. Children are keen to be chosen to take on responsibilities in class and to illustrate the weekly newsletter, which makes a positive contribution to the school community. Attendance is average and improving but adversely affected by a number of families taking holidays in term time. Such absences do little to support children's progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. All staff have good relationships with the children and encourage and praise them well. This helps them grow in confidence. Staff ask children a good range of questions to check their understanding and help move learning forward. However, they miss opportunities for children to discuss their ideas with others, so using and becoming familiar with key vocabulary. At times, the youngest and oldest children sit for too long on the carpet rather than being involved in practical learning or recording activities to extend their skills further. Planning is sometimes vague and does not ensure the highest level of challenge to all groups and particularly those of higher ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich learning, with Year 2 children gaining much enjoyment from a short residential visit. There is an interesting range of extra-curricular activities including French. The whole staff team has recently helped to focus on planning for the Foundation Stage in a praiseworthy effort to extend everyone's understanding of this key area. In the Reception class there is often a good balance between child chosen and adult led activities that make good use of indoor and outdoor facilities. The school rightly prioritises planning for literacy and numeracy and while this is generally appropriate, more could be done to develop speaking and writing skills in greater depth. For instance, in the pre-school group, current time allocations do not always allow for the development of speaking skills enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of children is satisfactory. A strong feature is the good quality of the pastoral care. The school is very generously staffed which ensures adults know the children well. Parents readily acknowledge that there is warmth to relationships and children feel happy, safe and secure. The checks of those who help in school have recently been improved and now meet statutory requirements. Child protection training, risk assessments and health and safety requirements are good. The support provided for those with learning difficulties enables them to make at least satisfactory progress. The school has spent time developing different assessment systems to track the progress children make. However, these are not yet refined enough to regularly check each small step being made. Data is not managed or used consistently to provide the highest level of challenge in subsequent lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has shown great commitment in many roles to the school and community over a number of years. School improvement planning is broadly satisfactory and identifies some of the areas for further development. However, staff are sometimes less clear in identifying what specific action needs

to be taken to bring about further change for the better. While the headteacher satisfactorily monitors the work of the school, self-evaluation is at times generous and does not always identify the sometimes small steps needed for improvement. The headteacher has encouraged staff to develop their roles as subject leaders but few opportunities have been taken. This lack of evaluative rigour has not always helped the school to move forward in a purposeful manner. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are keen to extend the number of times they meet, the depth of their discussions and involvement in day-to-day activities in order to be in a better position to help inform school improvement planning.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

4 July 2007

Dear Children

Huthwaite All Saints C of E (Aided) Infant School, Huthwaite, NG17 2JR

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, at lunchtime and when I spoke to a group of you. Your parents told me they are pleased with your school and wish you could stay here until you are 11.

These are the things that I think are best in your school.

- Staff care for you well and make sure that you are safe and happy.
- Most of you enjoy school and like practical activities.
- You grow in confidence because teachers give you lots of encouragement.
- You understand how to stay healthy and enjoy active playtimes.
- You like doing things to help others in school.

These are things that I think could be improved.

- Adults could organise more activities to help your speaking and writing skills.
- Teachers could use information from tests and from checking your work to plan activities that are a little harder for you.
- Staff could check what is happening in school a bit more to make sure they know what still needs to be improved.

Thank you again for chatting to me. Most of you contribute well to the life of the school. You can help even more by making sure you come to school regularly and try hard all the time. Finally, remember that to stay healthy you need to make sensible food choices.

With best wishes

Sue Hall

Lead inspector