

# Handford Hall Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124643
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	315000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jackie Cousins

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	284
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Natasha Kidd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jon Trotter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gatacre Road Ipswich Suffolk IP1 2LQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 251603
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 288965

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Half the pupils are from White British backgrounds and half are from minority ethnic groups. The level of knowledge and skill that many pupils start at school with is very low for three year olds, particularly in language and communication. Over one-third, a very significant proportion, of pupils is in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who find learning more difficult is well above average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the taught year is considerably above most primary schools. The school has the Healthy School, International School and Eco School Awards. Once a week, the school runs a 'Stay and Play' group for younger children and parents.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Handford Hall Primary is a good school at which pupils get a good start to their education. It has a few outstanding features. Standards are broadly average in Year 6 and pupils make good progress from a significantly below expected starting point. This is because pupils of all abilities and backgrounds settle quickly into the working environment, whether they start in the Nursery or any other year group. Furthermore, an excellent partnership is in place between the staff and parents. One parent summed it up when they said: 'My opinion is that the headteacher and the teachers are doing a great job.' Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire were really pleased that their child was safe and well cared for. The school works thoughtfully to unite the community. A 'Stay and Play' group assists younger children to learn to mix effectively and enables parents to find out about ways to help their child and others. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are incorporated successfully into school life because of the school's enormous commitment to include them.

The school's leadership places a very high emphasis on developing pupil's self-esteem and independence. Staff offer pupils a committed and good level of care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning because of the ways that staff inspire them. One parent remarked: 'When you are in school you see how pupils respect staff and how they in turn respect the children... they give the children confidence in what they do.' Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is because the school celebrates with enthusiasm everyone's uniqueness and their many different cultures. Pupils are very proud of their school and they work together in harmony and friendliness. Pupils behave well because staff guide them dutifully. They adopt healthy lifestyles effectively because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise.

Attendance has risen to average levels because pupils' enjoyment in many school activities is outstanding. This is mostly because of the wide variety of interesting projects planned by the school. The curriculum is well thought out and is enriched by the teaching of philosophy. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teaching is good and so pupils make effective gains in their learning. The good use of practical teaching methods ensure that pupils develop their key skills well. However, planning for lessons does not always set specific objectives for different groups and so pupils are not sure about how to evaluate their successes at higher levels of skill. The school does not always share targets consistently with pupils in all classes and so they do not have a deep enough understanding of how to improve their work.

Good leadership and management have resulted in the school making good improvements since the last inspection, and it is in a good position to continue improving in the future. Although leaders now monitor the school well overall, systems to track pupil's progress are not fully developed. This means that leaders and staff do have a clear record of what proportion of pupils are making satisfactory or good progress.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Consequently, children have rich opportunities to learn in the inside and outside areas. Many children start at school not being able to speak

English. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but standards are well below expectations by the start of Year 1. Children develop their basic skills well because staff challenge them successfully and deepen their understanding through effective questioning. Their personal development is good because staff care for them effectively. They learn to do things well for themselves due to the high expectations of staff. Occasionally, children do not understand how to improve their work because feedback from staff is not always specific.

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

- Develop the system for tracking pupils' standards so that the school is able to monitor their progress more successfully.
- Improve lesson planning to ensure that the different groups of pupils are challenged equally well to attain higher levels of skill.
- Develop the use of individual targets and feedback to pupils' so that they have a deeper understanding of how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well from Nursery to Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning to read, write and do mathematics. Those with additional needs make good progress because they have excellent support from staff and the special needs coordinator. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well because teachers have high expectations of them. Those who speak English as an additional language are carefully assessed when they enter the school. This enables them to make good progress because of the effective support they receive from specialist teachers. In 2007 boys and girls attained similar broadly average standards in Year 6 tests. Although expected proportions of pupils attained above average levels in mathematics and science fewer than expected gained above the national average standards in English.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils love coming to this school and there is a great spirit of anticipation and enjoyment of learning in most lessons. One pupil said: 'Learning is fun here. You have to think hard but the teachers are all up for you. They want you to achieve your best.' Pupils raise money for many charities and support the local community successfully. The school council works effectively to improve the school for everyone. Although a few parents are worried about behaviour in the school, it is clear that the vast majority of pupils are well behaved. Pupils handle play equipment safely and move about the school with consideration for others. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although a few pupils are taken on extended family holidays to their home countries. However, the school works hard with communities to reduce this and makes considerable efforts to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. Pupils well developed social skills and sound literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT) skills mean they are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is effective because it assists pupils to achieve well. Teachers use questioning thoughtfully and so pupils learn to think deeply for themselves. Good teaching methods develop pupils' basic skills. For example, Year 6 pupils learn about the strengths of a piece of writing because ICT is used well to share texts with the class. Assessment activities are used effectively, especially to identify those pupils who are underachieving. The use of skilled teaching assistants and teachers with small groups mean pupils receive valuable extra attention. However, not all pupils are challenged fully in lessons because teachers' planning is not consistently helping pupils to use even higher levels of skill.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is developing successfully. The provision for literacy and numeracy across the school is good. Projects are well planned and the links between areas of learning are beginning to be developed more fully. The new curriculum planning emphasises the importance of teaching pupils' key skills effectively. In the main, different groups of pupils are catered for well. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided for very effectively and so they achieve well, as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and especially those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. However, provision for gifted and talented pupils is not fully developed. Pupils have a good choice of extra activities including sports and music. The curriculum is enriched well with visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. ICT is used well to develop basic skills and enhance pupils' learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The overall quality of care guidance and support for pupils is good and ensures that they develop into responsible and thoughtful young people. Staff provide a dedicated and excellent level of welfare and care. Effective induction and high quality personal support ensures that pupils settle successfully into school life. This is particularly important for those pupils who join the school part way through their primary education. Pupils' attendance is monitored thoroughly by the school. They are encouraged successfully to lead healthy and safe lives. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements fully because the school works carefully to ensure this is so. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory overall. This is because some pupils do not know how to improve their work and a few say they do not often discuss their targets with staff. Nevertheless, pupils' individual education plans are used well and contain specific and measurable targets for those who have additional needs.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The good quality of education is due to effective management. The headteacher and the new deputy headteacher give an excellent steer to the school. Good use of governors' expertise, as well as relevant training, means they support the school's work and development effectively.

Because they work together well, the governing body and senior management team are driving forward a vision of the school and its community work that inspires staff, parents and pupils and gives the school a good capacity for further improvement. School leaders use self-evaluation well. In 2007 it met most of its challenging targets and so is improving standards by Year 6. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further work. The systems they have to check pupils' attainment have been improved considerably over the last year and the school is now in a good position to look even more rigorously at pupil progress. However, leaders do not always ensure that a detailed record is created which outlines the strategies that will be used to support those who are underachieving.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	1
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

<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	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	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**

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Handford Hall Primary School, Ipswich, IP1 2LQ.

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking with some of you. You are lucky to attend such a good, happy and friendly school. Good things about your school include the facts that:

- you make good progress in your work
- you behave and concentrate well in lessons
- you really enjoy school
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is good and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a wonderful partnership is in place between the school and your parents
- staff care for you well.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things are:

- make sure that your progress is tracked even more carefully
- ensure that clearer lesson objectives are shared with you so that you can do even better work
- make sure that you understand how to meet your targets more fully.

Keep enjoying all the things you are learning at Handford Hall Primary School.

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector