

Hall Meadow Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	132769
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	316011
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Freer
Headteacher	Lorraine Cullen
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Packer Road Lake Avenue Kettering NN15 7JR
Telephone number	01536 417627
Fax number	01536 417629

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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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 progress made by pupils in writing, how well leaders and managers identify reasons for any difference in progress by groups of pupils and how well they take action to bring about improvement. Evidence was gathered from observations, discussions and the school's assessments of pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected 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 in this report.

Description of the school

This primary school serves an area in which the social and economic circumstances of families are generally favourable. It has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are White British with about a sixth of pupils of diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. Children's attainment when they start in Reception is as expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The pursuit of excellence is reflected in every aspect of its work and it provides pupils with a very fine platform for future success. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school. One summed up the view held by many by commenting: 'We could not wish for more from this school. The staff want the best for children and allow for their individual needs and aspirations. Our children have come on in leaps and bounds.'

Pupils really enjoy school and are fired with enthusiasm for learning because of excellent teaching in all parts of the school. Reception children make excellent progress and so standards are above average on their entry to Year 1. The outstanding achievement of pupils means they reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Pupils are set challenging targets and understand what to do to reach them. This is because of excellent guidance and timely feedback from the staff. Pupils think about their learning and frequently review how well they have done at the end of sessions. They use the knowledge gained to identify how they can improve. The targets set for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are drawn from the careful identification of their individual needs. Precise teaching supports these pupils' excellent progress so that targets are reached. Very effective teaching is finely tailored to ensure the success of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language.

In nearly all respects there is a consistency of practice in teaching. This gives clear messages to pupils and keeps expectations high. Assessment is thorough and accurate, and is used well to plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. A significant strength in pupils' learning is the extent to which they question each other and set their own challenges. This raises their self-esteem and confidence in making independent choices. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6 on solving problems, for example, the suggestion made by a pupil, 'Lets try this out first to see if it will work this way', prompted a flurry of enthusiastic activity that deepened the group's understanding. The basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are taught thoroughly from the Reception year onwards and so pupils' skills in writing are very good. There are a few times when teaching does not sufficiently spark pupils' interest in writing. This occasionally hinders the progress of pupils who find the writing process more difficult because their motivation to write is not stimulated.

High quality care and guidance by staff result in pupils' excellent personal development and sense of well-being. The school uses advice very well from outside agencies to provide support for vulnerable children. The high rate of attendance shows pupils' pleasure in coming to school. Pupils say that 'This is a great place to be because you are trusted to take responsibility.' They contribute very effectively to their school community by acting as members of the school council, as sports leaders and playground buddies. Pupils are excited by projects that foster their skills in planning and organising. A group of Year 6 pupils, for example, is currently involved in a project to provide a watering system for outdoor plants using wind and solar power. All classes are involved in the annual 'business week' when they carry out initiatives that involve costing and marketing their ideas. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of how to keeping themselves and others safe. Those trained as junior road safety officers take their responsibilities seriously and work effectively to raise their peers awareness of how to keep safe outside school. Pupils know the importance of eating a varied diet and that leading active lives sets them up for their future health. Many take advantage of the trim trail. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are exemplary. They are friendly, very polite and treat everyone with great

respect. These factors help to create a happy community in which tolerance and consideration for others are part of daily life.

Pupils greet every day with a sense of anticipation because of the wealth of opportunities to learn in different ways. As one pupil put it, 'We know more than one strategy and work with partners or groups and use computers.' The curriculum is very well planned to link pupils' learning in different subjects and is greatly enhanced by a wide range of extra activities. Parents help to provide clubs in craft, signing and cookery. Partnership with other schools in sports broadens pupils' experiences and enables many pupils to join in enthusiastically.

The staff have high ambitions for the pupils and are as enthusiastic about teaching as the pupils are about learning. Everyone feels part of the drive to take the school forward. The headteacher gives a strong direction to a highly effective team of leaders and managers who use their diverse talents wisely to support improvements. Very effective systems ensure that the school is accurate in evaluating itself. Meticulous checks on pupils' progress and teaching and learning lead to considered and highly effective action to bring about improvement. The information gained through progress checks is also used wisely to provide effective support for any individuals in danger of falling behind. This has meant that high standards have been maintained over several years. Governors play a full part in school life and keep the school on its toes by asking pertinent questions about its performance. They discharge their responsibilities very well. The school has outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents rightly feel that children in Reception receive a first-rate start to their education. Excellent provision results from very effective leadership and management. Consequently, young children settle happily and effortlessly into school life. The warm and supportive atmosphere and well established routines nurture children's feeling of security. Adults and children share a sense of exploration in learning. Very effective teaching ensures that children receive just what they need to make very rapid progress in all of the areas of learning. Adults use what they learn from observing children's individual progress very effectively to build new challenge into activities. Children are happy and confident because adults appreciate and praise their efforts. The vibrant curriculum balances times when children choose their activities and adults decide what they need to do to speed their learning. Children quickly learn to cooperate because of the many opportunities to work together and explore the world around them. As in other parts of the school, the need has been identified to ensure that tasks in writing provide a consistent level of stimulation for children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers more consistently stimulate pupils' interest in writing.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hall Meadow Primary School, Kettering, NN15 7JR

Thank you for welcoming me when I spent the day at your school. It was a pleasure to see you working so hard and enjoying school so much. I can see why your parents are so happy that you go to Hall Meadow Primary School, because it is giving you an excellent education. I am writing to tell you what else I found out about your school.

- You do very well in your work and reach high standards by the time you leave. This is because of the super teaching.
- You are growing up as sensible and friendly young people who enjoy helping your community and each other. Your behaviour is brilliant. These things help your school to be such a happy place. Congratulations to everybody!
- You told me that there are many exciting things for you to do every day in your lessons and in the extra activities. You think carefully to find different ways of solving problems together.
- You know why it is important to eat a balanced diet and you take plenty of exercise to keep fit. You are very good at keeping yourselves and other people safe.
- The staff take very good care of you and quickly help you to sort out any problems. They give you extra help if you need it.
- The staff enjoy being with you and have high hopes for you. The people in charge check how they can make things even better for you. Everyone is working really hard to make sure that this happens.

The staff have rightly noticed that a few of you are not as keen to write down your ideas at times. I have asked them to make sure that the work in writing is always as exciting as it can be for you. Your parents and the staff are right to be so proud of you. Keep on enjoying your time at Hall Meadow Primary School. You have bright futures because it is giving you such a good start.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead inspector

28 March 2008

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Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane
Lead inspector