

High Oakham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133278
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316059
Inspection date	10 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Sankey
Headteacher	Mr P Mansfield
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Nottingham Road Mansfield NG18 4SH
Telephone number	01623461313
Fax number	01623461670

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector investigated the following issues: the impact of strategies for raising standards in English and mathematics, and boys' progress in English; the effectiveness of monitoring and guidance and the use of assessment to support pupils' progress; the accuracy of the school's self evaluation. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils and the chair of governors and extensive school documentation, including its self-evaluation statement. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no reason to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

High Oakham Primary School is larger in size than most other primary schools. On entry to the Reception, most children have levels of skills similar to those expected for children of their age. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils have English as their first language. There are no pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school holds the Arts Mark Silver Award and the Gold Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher took up his post in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

High Oakham Primary School is a satisfactory school with several good and improving features. It provides an adequate quality of education for its pupils, has improved since its last inspection and gives satisfactory value for money. The school works well with other schools, agencies and the community to enrich pupils' education and ensure their well-being. The majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. One parent's comment typified the opinion of many, 'This is a caring school, which I am delighted my son goes to'.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school has a satisfactory capacity for continued improvement. Since his appointment, the headteacher, with good support from other senior leaders, has brought a clear vision for the future development of the school. There is a clear commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve to their full capability. This commitment is underpinned by a more systematic approach to self evaluation, which provides an accurate view of the school's overall performance and is used to indicate where improvement is needed. However, similar self-review procedures have yet to be embedded in the routine work of staff with coordinating responsibilities. Governors are very supportive and keen to help the school's continued improvement.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Because teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and standards are above national expectations by the time they enter Key Stage 1. However, this good progress has not been built on in Key Stage 1 where inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning have had an adverse effect on pupils' progress. The overall quality of teaching across the school as a whole is satisfactory. There are many examples of good teaching, particularly in the later stages of Key Stage 2 where progress accelerates; however, the progress made in these years does not compensate for the slower progress made in the earlier years. As a result, although standards overall are above average, progress in English and mathematics is only satisfactory and the targets set for 2007 were not achieved. The school is taking action to tackle this weakness and inspection evidence shows that better progress is being made and standards are rising, particularly in mathematics. One of the factors contributing to this improvement is the better use of assessment information by class teachers to plan lessons and identify gaps in learning. However, in English, while standards in reading are improving, weaknesses in writing, and particularly in that of boys, are slowing an overall rise in standards. Pupils who find learning more difficult make satisfactory progress because they are supported well by class teachers and teaching assistants.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The school meets legal requirements for safeguarding pupils and procedures for child protection are thorough. Pupils feel safe and secure because of the good quality support and guidance the school provides. Support for learning has been strengthened by the better use of assessment information to set challenging, but achievable, targets and to track pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy their education and their behaviour is good. They understand the value of healthy lifestyles and make good contributions to the school and wider community. Attendance is average, mainly because of family holidays taken during term time; the school tries hard to discourage this. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good, which helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is being revised to place an increased emphasis on the development of basic skills. As part of this process the school recognises the need to ensure

greater continuity and progression in the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all year groups. A good range of enrichment activities is used to extend the curriculum. A variety of clubs and residential visits contribute well to the personal and social development of pupils. Specialist tuition by musicians and sports coaches extend pupils' skills and learning experiences. Effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they are fully involved in all school activities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Reception class is good. There are effective induction arrangements when children start school and they quickly settle into everyday routines. Adults have a good awareness of the needs of children of this age and set activities that are practical and stimulating for them. As a result, children make good progress across all areas of learning and most are working above the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Children behave well and relationships are good. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are good, and the need to extend children's learning experiences by developing the outdoor curriculum has been identified. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly those of boys, so that progress in English is at least good.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good in all classes in order to accelerate progress and raise standards further.
- Ensure that curriculum planning provides continuity and progression in the development of literacy and numeracy skills as children move through the school.
- Develop the roles of staff with co-coordinating responsibilities to enable them to monitor more systematically the impact of strategies 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.

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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
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 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?	2

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	2
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	2
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

11 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of High Oakham School, Mansfield, NG18 4SH

Following my visit to inspect your school, I am now writing to tell you what I found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and making my visit one that I really enjoyed. I have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite, and it was good to hear from you how much you enjoy school. I particularly enjoyed listening to you sing in assembly and seeing the way you take care of each other.

- You enjoy school and behave well. This is really helpful to your teachers because they can concentrate on helping you to learn.
- You get on well with each other and with all of the adults in the school. The older pupils look after others well and are very willing to take on responsible jobs.
- Teachers try hard to make your lessons interesting, and you told us how much you enjoy your lessons, and particularly those in which you are active.
- You enjoy the additional activities and clubs and some of these are helping you to have a good understanding of how to be healthy.
- You know that all of the staff are there to help you and we were pleased to hear that you know what to do if you have a problem.

Mr Mansfield, all of the staff and governors are keen to make the school even better. They have all agreed to focus on some things to help this. They will be trying hard to improve your writing skills and to make sure that you make good progress in all of your lessons. All staff will be working together to make sure that your literacy and numeracy skills build as you go through the school. Staff with responsibility for coordinating the work of different subjects will be more involved in checking how well the school is doing.

Having met you, I know that you will want to help your teachers as much as you can and make High Oakham an even better school. I left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead Inspector