

Howes Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134426
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	316261
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Rowe
Headteacher	Carol Brammer
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2005
School address	Palmero Avenue Cheylesmore Coventry CV3 5EH
Telephone number	02476 411711
Fax number	02476 693392

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an area on the fringe of Coventry. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is well above average, as is the proportion speaking English as an additional language, although the great majority of these pupils are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average because the school houses a special unit for pupils with hearing impairment. The headteacher had only been in post for ten weeks at the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Howes provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. They enjoy school and their personal development is good. A friendly, caring environment helps them to feel happy and secure at school, form good relationships and trust the adults who work with them. Achievement for most pupils is satisfactory and they leave with average standards, because teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support they receive are satisfactory. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils who attend the hearing impaired unit (HIU) is good, so they make better progress than others. Throughout the school, teachers and pupils get on well with each other. Pupils feel confident in raising any concerns they have, knowing that they will be taken seriously. They mostly enjoy lessons but become bored when the pace of lessons slows because they spend too long on tasks that require them to simply listen to the teacher. This rarely occurs in the Foundation Stage or in the HIU, partly because there are more adults available in these classes so they are able to respond to pupils' individual needs more quickly. In other classes, there is no clear pattern of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Expectations will be high in one lesson, for example, but low in the next. The checks that the school's leaders carry out on the quality of teaching clearly identify such strengths and areas for improvement in individual lessons. Leadership and management are only satisfactory, however, because the findings are not analysed to provide an accurate picture of the effectiveness of teaching across the school, in terms of its impact on the progress made by pupils. This leads to the school's managers evaluating teaching and the school's overall effectiveness as good, when pupils only make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, the school's leaders, including governors, have demonstrated the skills necessary to take the school forward. For example, in the way they have tackled the underachievement identified in mathematics in 2007 and in current developments to develop more robust procedures for analysing data. There is a clear vision for the school's future and all staff are keen to improve the quality of education provided.

The school's strength lies in the culture of respect for others, which is evident throughout the school and which plays a strong part in promoting pupils' good personal development. Cultural differences are celebrated and pupils with hearing impairment are exceptionally well integrated into the life of the school. Most pupils behave well, and their attendance is satisfactory. The curriculum provides an excellent education in health and safety, so these aspects of personal development, along with the part that pupils play in the community, are outstanding. More academic aspects of the curriculum, such as the provision for literacy and numeracy, are satisfactory, but the school is already working to improve them. Pastoral care is strong and the school has particularly good links with outside agencies and parents of children in the Foundation Stage and HIU. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils all have targets, but they do not always understand what they mean or receive enough guidance on how to reach them.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Induction procedures are of high quality and ensure that both children and their parents know exactly what to expect when they arrive at school. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the level expected of three-year-olds. As they progress through the Foundation Stage the good quality teaching and regular assessments of work ensure that children make good progress, so they start Year 1 with standards that are

average for their age. Adults provide a stimulating environment both within the classroom and in the outdoor play area, although they do not always make the most of opportunities to develop language and mathematical skills in the sand and water areas. Good quality care and support ensure that social skills are developed well. Children learn routines quickly. Relationships with children are good and adults provide good role models. Children make particularly good progress when working in small groups with adults, where resources are used very effectively to develop children's understanding. Reception children used jigsaws and models to explain the life cycle of a frog, for example.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse more thoroughly the results of monitoring, taking account of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, in order to identify and implement actions that will reduce inconsistencies in teaching.
- Ensure pupils spend less time on activities that do not require them to be active, in order to improve the progress they make in lessons.
- Ensure pupils know what their targets mean and what they need to do to reach them.

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

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in the school. They start Year 1 with standards that are average, and leave with average standards. There was some underachievement in mathematics last year, but managers have moved quickly to ensure pupils who are falling behind are identified sooner and helped to catch up. Progress in writing is a little slower than in reading, but this too is being tackled by, for example, giving pupils more opportunities to write at length. Pupils with hearing impairment make good progress. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in the HIU, and are given all the support they need to develop such skills in other subjects when they join mainstream classes each afternoon. Other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, in line with that of other pupils in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They talk with great enthusiasm about the physical activities and the many clubs run for them. A strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills has a positive effect on behaviour. Most show high standards of behaviour in the classroom and when moving about school. A small minority of pupils become restless and go off task when they are inactive in lessons. Pupils possess an outstanding knowledge of healthy living and keeping safe both in and out of school. Even at a young age they show a remarkable awareness of how to use equipment without endangering themselves or others, for example. Pupils have a good understanding of the world's major religions and respect those who are different from themselves. At break times, other pupils relate very well to those attending the HIU. All pupils can use some sign language and are keen to learn more. Pupils are developing satisfactorily the skills which they will need in the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. One pupil commented, 'I am proud to be a member of the school council.' The school council interview applicants for jobs, including the new headteacher. They talk with pride about their contribution to the design of the trim trail. Pupils are concerned about global issues such as eco-matters and recycling. They raise money for charities, including the China earthquake appeal. Pupils in the HIU are fully involved in the school and wider community. They take the lead in assemblies, for example. A pupil in the unit is featured signing in a modern foreign language video that is being circulated to all local schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

One reason for pupils' good enjoyment of school is the relationship they have with their teachers. They are encouraged to work hard and so try their best. They make the best gains in understanding when they are 'doing' rather than just listening, and in some lessons the pace is slowed when they spend too long on the carpet or listening to the teacher read. Teaching across the school has a variety of both strengths and weaknesses, but these differ from class to class. In one lesson, for example, the teacher will show they have a deep understanding of the subject by answering questions 'off the top of their head'. In other lessons, knowledge is less secure, so mistakes are made when teaching theory. The school is currently working to ensure greater consistency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but progress in writing is slower than in reading because there are few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. The curriculum for mathematics includes some opportunities to carry out investigations. When these are used, such as in measuring areas or using computers for modelling, pupils make good gains in understanding. However, there are relatively few such opportunities at present. In Years 1 to 6 themes are being planned to help pupils build successfully on previous work, but this development is at an early stage. Pupils in the HIU have access to a good quality curriculum which is very well matched to their individual needs. Provision for health and social development is good. There is a very strong emphasis on physical education and the school is proud of its National Activemark and Healthy School Award. The curriculum is enhanced well by a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils talk about these activities with real enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides strong pastoral and emotional care and support for its pupils. Adults and pupils develop strong relationships and pupils comment that they have someone to talk to if they have a problem. Pupils in the HIU receive outstanding support. They settle in very quickly and are very happy at school. Equipment, which is often new to them, is introduced with great care and never used until the pupil is entirely happy. The school makes good use of visiting specialists to support its work in the HIU, while other adults ensure that hearing impaired pupils can play a full part in mainstream lessons. Good links with outside agencies ensure that

vulnerable pupils are well looked after and can make as much progress as others. Child protection and health and safety procedures meet all requirements. The school has identified pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory and is working with the local authority to improve the situation. However, not enough is done to celebrate and encourage good attendance in school by, for example, using rewards or praising those who are never absent. Pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy. Discussion with younger pupils show that some are not always clear about their targets and marking does not consistently provide the guidance they need to move to the next stage of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision and a determination to improve provision in the school. The school's senior managers, including governors, have an accurate view of how well pupils achieve because they make good use of the data on pupils' progress to spot those who may be falling behind. Frequent checks are carried out on teaching, identifying what works well and what could be improved. However, these two aspects of monitoring are not then compared to provide managers with a clear picture of why pupils do better in one class than another. This means that managers are not able to identify patterns in strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school and so cannot prioritise the most important areas for improvement. Middle managers have not played a significant part in driving the school forward in the recent past. However, the appointment of two phase leaders with additional responsibility for literacy and numeracy has led to a surge of improvement, with changes to the curriculum already helping pupils to make better progress. This typifies the approach of staff, who are very supportive of the senior managers' drive to improve standards.

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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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

2 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Howes Primary School, Coventry CV3 5EH

Thank you for making us so welcome we visited your school. We found talking to you very helpful and were impressed by your good manners. You clearly care about other people, both in the school and across the world. We think the way you help to run the school, look out for one another and respect each other is brilliant. You also take good care of yourselves and have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit, safe and healthy. It was great to see so much fruit being eaten at break, and not an unhealthy snack anywhere. Well done to you all.

Overall, we found that you are getting a satisfactory education. You make as much progress as we would expect in lessons, although those of you with hearing difficulties and the children in the Nursery and Reception classes do well. You told us that you learn best when you are doing things, rather than just listening. We saw this was true in lessons, when some of you got bored and started daydreaming. So we have asked your teachers to get you onto tasks where you are active as soon as possible. However, sometimes they have to talk to you all together, so you must do your bit by concentrating as hard as you can on what is being said. You told us how much you enjoy school, because you get on well with all the grown-ups. You also like all the extra clubs and activities. All the grown-ups help you when you are unhappy or have any problems. They are particularly good at making sure that children new to the school settle in as quickly as possible. One area that could be a bit better is the way you are helped to reach your targets. So we have asked the teachers to make sure you know what your targets mean and what you have to do to reach them.

The people who run the school all want the best for you and are making the school better. We have suggested that they could do this even more quickly if they listed all the best bits of teaching and made sure all the other teachers knew about them.

With all best wishes for your futures

David Driscoll Lead inspector

Annex B

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Lead inspector