

Hallow CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116882
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	319477
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Hawkins
Headteacher	Simon Stubbs
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002
School address	Main Road Hallow Worcester WR2 6LD
Telephone number	01905 640354
Fax number	01905 642870

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular village school is smaller than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had been in post for 18 months and the school was in the middle of building works. In that inspection, in May 2007, the school was given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' achievement, the effectiveness of teaching, and the use of assessment in meeting the full range of learners' needs. Since that time, a number of staff changes have taken place and a support programme has been implemented by the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13(5) of The Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school that has made significant improvement since its last inspection. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. One parent commented that, 'The school has made great progress in the last couple of years,' and another said, 'I feel that improvements made since the last inspection have been miraculous.' Teaching is now good throughout the school and all pupils are making good progress. The local authority provided good support to the school, but has not found it necessary to maintain a high profile in the last few months as the school was very clearly being effective without extensive help from outside. The improvements demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Standards on entry to the school are broadly average and pupils leave the school with standards that are above average. Pupils are now making good progress. All pupils have made similar progress with no variations between subjects. In all the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least good, confirming the school's view that teaching and learning are now good. The school's systems to monitor pupils' skills and progress are established. Work generally provides sufficient challenge for most pupils and this is shown by the increasing number of more able pupils reaching higher levels in tests. At the present time, there are a few inconsistencies in the use of assessment data to ensure all pupils are set appropriate work. Marking is regular and helps pupils understand what they should have done. It is not yet sufficiently used to make all pupils aware of what they need to do to improve further.

Throughout the school, support provided for the pupils with specific needs is good. Whilst a very few parents have had concerns about the support provided for their child, the majority were very pleased with the support. The restructuring of the leadership team has already started to strengthen this area. Those who need academic help benefit from intervention strategies including individual help in lessons and booster classes. The partnership with other agencies to support the well-being of all pupils is good.

Staff look after pupils well. All adults are good role models and relationships are extremely good. Pupils are polite, friendly, courteous and well behaved. The current Year 6 are a credit to the school even though, as pupils of that year group told us, 'We had a rough deal in Year 2 and at the beginning of Year 3 but have done really well since then.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and they feel safe in the building and the playground. They are aware of the need to eat healthily and they participate well in the sporting activities available. Pupils make good contributions to both the school and to the wider community. Their improved key skills mean they are now well prepared to achieve future economic success.

The current leadership and management of the school are good. The effectiveness of senior staff in setting a clear direction to improve both care and education has been outstanding. The well led governing body provides valuable support to the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff in the Reception classes give good support to children and ensure that they have a positive and nurturing start in school. This includes a good link with Year 5 pupils who act as buddies and as learning partners. Parents say they are really pleased with the care their children get

and how well they are informed of what is happening through the weekly newsletters. There is a good range of child initiated opportunities. The curriculum is well planned for both indoor and outdoor learning. There have been some good developments in the outdoor facilities, but the area is not yet complete. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills close to the expected levels, although some children in the current Reception classes have already been identified as having learning difficulties. Staff make regular observational assessments to create a picture of how well the children are learning. Children's work shows good phonic development and parents commented on how much further forward their children are with reading than had previously been the case with their older siblings. By the end of the Reception year most are working at standards above expected levels in many areas of their learning, having made good progress. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share good practice in the use of assessment data to help all pupils achieve even higher standards in all core subjects.
- Ensure marking is used consistently to help pupils understand how to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there is a wide range of ability. In 2007, the standards attained by pupils were broadly average. At that time, progress made by the Year 6 pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 was satisfactory, although progress in lessons was inadequate. Standards have risen throughout the school and are now above average in Year 1 to Year 6. All pupils currently make good progress in all year groups in English, mathematics and science. The current Year 6 pupils have made good progress in the last three years, but have only made satisfactory progress since they joined the school because of difficult experiences in Year 2 and at the beginning of Year 3. There are no significant differences between the performance in the core subjects and between any groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Opportunities for cultural development are limited in this mainly monocultural community and, although music makes a significant contribution, other areas such as art do not. The school is aware that this is an area for further development. The vast majority of parents think behaviour is good and, as the pupils said, 'There are only a few squabbles and if we cannot sort it out ourselves the school does.' Pupils are very sensible and mature. Even though the Year 6 pupils had finished their assessment tests, they were still working hard and said, 'We need to apply ourselves 110% to our work.' Although pupils all enjoy being at the school and taking part in the many activities available to them, their attendance, being close to the national average, is satisfactory. The school is continuing with its efforts to improve this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons well, taking account of pupils' different abilities. Work for the more able pupils is now more challenging than was the case a year ago. Classes are well managed and pupils know what is expected of them. In an effective mathematics lesson for example, pupils had been expected to take the lead on planning sports day, and they applied their knowledge of estimation on deciding how many chairs and tables were needed on the day. Teachers place great emphasis on developing a good rapport with pupils, valuing their ideas and suggestions, and developing their confidence to participate fully. Teachers are very encouraging to pupils, guiding their thinking and learning effectively with probing questions. Teaching assistants work with good expertise to support pupils with high levels of need and more generally offer sound support to pupils. Pupils are still at an early stage of judging their own learning success. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies too much at present.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum benefits from an exceptional range of music and physical education activities in class lessons and enrichment clubs. Staff development for the literacy and numeracy curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Stimulating curriculum experiences are reflected in role play in the Foundation Stage and in the main school, varied displays are used to make the school an attractive place in which to learn. There is good provision in science with lively investigative science lessons. Specialist teaching of music to classes enables pupils to develop extra skills for which they would not otherwise have the opportunity. Staff training is currently being undertaken to allow teaching of a modern foreign language to be reinstated in Key Stage 2. The formal identification of pupils who are gifted and talented is an advanced stage of planning. The well planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides a good start to children's education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils agree that the school is a very safe place. One parent said, 'Hallow offers not only excellent teaching and learning but is a safe 'homely' environment in which children grow in confidence.' Careful attention is paid to health and safety, including minimising possible risks. Child protection procedures are clear and kept under review. The needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are assessed regularly. External agencies are used well to provide appropriate support for pupils' well-being.

Assessment has improved since last year. However, this has been a 'trial year' and the system has not always been used in both English and mathematics in all classes. There has been insufficient time for teachers to share their experiences. The school acknowledges it has found inconsistencies in the use of marking, but pupils spoken to could discuss the ways in which marking helped them learn. Not all marking gives sufficient guidance on how to get to higher levels of attainment. The school has not yet completed the analysis of pupils' gifts and talents in order to signpost them to additional opportunities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The current leadership team has a good understanding of the school's areas for development. The way in which it has set a clear direction leading to improvement and promoting high quality of care and education is outstanding. This applies to all levels of leadership, including governors. The school has made good use of challenging targets to raise standards. Secure and comprehensive data systems have been introduced to enable effective monitoring of progress. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The governing body is developing well into a skilled and knowledgeable group and the extent to which members discharge their responsibilities is good. In a challenging year when the many aspects of the school have rapidly improved from inadequate to good, there has been insufficient time to complete staff training to enable a modern foreign language to be reintroduced into the upper part of the school and to complete the identification of gifted and talented pupils.

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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?	2
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 ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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?	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

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?	2
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	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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hallow CofE Primary School, Hallow WR2 6LD

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed our time there, meeting with you and your teachers, as well as talking with you during the day. Yours is a good school which has made considerable progress since the previous inspection a year ago. It no longer needs a Notice to Improve. You and the school have many strengths and here are some of them.

- The school is well led and managed and the way that senior staff have set about improving the school for you is outstanding.
- You are all making good progress because teaching is consistently good and you all work hard.
- Your behaviour is always good and you have very good relationships with each other and with adults in the school.
- Good systems have been introduced to monitor how well you are doing in lessons and make sure the work you are given is sufficiently challenging.
- You enjoy all aspects of the school but especially the activity sessions and the extra-curricular opportunities available to you.
- You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. To help the school improve and become even better, we have asked the school to do two things.
- Share the skills it has learnt during the last year about assessing your work and monitoring your progress so that you can achieve even higher standards in all your subjects.
- Ensure that marking of your work helps you to understand what you need to do to improve further.

We wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood Lead inspector