

# Howley Grange Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	103814
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323901
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Deana Holdaway HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Bruten
Headteacher	Mr M James
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2005
School address	Howley Grange Road Halesowen West Midlands B62 0HS
Telephone number	01384 818395
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including analyses of several surveys of parents' and pupils' views. The inspection team also took account of the 155 parental and 27 staff questionnaires which were returned to them.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of writing across the school
- how well assessment informs pupils' progress
- the ability of the school, at all levels, to evaluate what is done and set future priorities.

## Information about the school

Howley Grange Primary School is a popular school, drawing pupils from its own immediate community as well as a number of neighbouring local authorities. There is a privately run nursery on site.

## Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	418	Above average
Free school meals	3.3%	Below average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	11.4%	Below average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	8%	Below average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	None	Below average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	2%	Below average

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

This is a good school in which pupils achieve above average academic standards and outstanding personal development. Parents, staff and pupils are proud of the school and appreciate the many popular out-of-school activities. The school's support, guidance and care for pupils are excellent. Procedures for the pupils' safety are effective and the school actively promotes inclusion and equality while determinedly tackling discrimination. The school has demonstrated good capacity to improve and leaders, managers, staff and governors are not complacent and want the best for all pupils.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the accuracy and impact of assessment for learning by:
  - referring to detailed descriptors of National Curriculum levels and parts of levels so that teachers and pupils can confidently and accurately assess what pupils know and can do, and plan what they need to do next
  - teaching pupils how to evaluate and assess their own work and that of others
  - making regular informal assessments to plan the next appropriate learning steps and ensure maximum progress in lessons
  - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they direct questions at pupils of different abilities more effectively and adapt lessons in response to their answers.
- Build purposeful and memorable experiences into the curriculum by:
  - making more links, where appropriate, across the curriculum
  - inspiring pupils' interests further through requiring them to observe, investigate, solve and reflect on a variety of learning experiences
  - capturing pupils' and adults' imaginative ideas to capitalise on a curriculum which is relevant for its community and exciting for all those involved.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

2

- Pupils of all ages make good progress: they enjoy learning and try hard in lessons. They take a pride in their work and are keen to explain what they are

learning and how well they are doing. Those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational need make significantly better progress than is the case nationally. Although numbers are very small, pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve at least the expected standards for their age.

- An overwhelming majority of pupils reach nationally expected standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. This level of performance, together with the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in Key Stage 1 and Level 5 in Key Stage 2, is well above the national average. Standards in writing, by pupils of all ages, have improved since the last inspection in 2005.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They feel confident and safe in school and readily take on additional responsibilities. Arrangements for the care and well-being of pupils are thorough. Members of the school council are proactive in decision making and school ‘buddies’ are enthusiastic helpers.
- Older pupils are good ambassadors for health promotion. About half of the pupils take advantage of the healthy school lunches: a much higher proportion than is the case nationally. After school sports activities, clubs and teams are very popular and contribute purposefully to pupils’ healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils work cooperatively in lessons and learn valuable team-work skills. For example, Year 6 pupils adopted the roles of a newspaper editor, reporter, deputy editor and writer to experience the different levels of responsibility, accountability and pressures of timed deadlines. Attendance is above average but a small number of pupils are persistently late for school.
- Pupils have an outstanding sense of moral and ethical issues and their empathy for those less fortunate than themselves was illustrated excellently in a class assembly. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the range of cultures and religions found in Britain today.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

Pupils' attendance and punctuality	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

## The quality of the school's work

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, activities and questions accurately match the pupils' abilities and reinforce the depth of their understanding. Teachers' enthusiasm and energy are infectious but they are most effective when they are channelled precisely at purposeful and focused learning so that progress is assured. In an outstanding Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson a pupil explained, 'The teacher makes it fun and explains things really well.'
- Teachers confidently directed their lessons from the interactive whiteboards in each classroom to maximise pupils' engagement and learning.
- Although pupils make good progress, day-to-day informal assessment is not consistently implemented across the school. As a consequence, learning is not always matched sufficiently to pupils' different abilities.
- Good management systems record and track pupils' progress. Pupils' individual targets are reviewed termly and incidents of underachievement are identified so that appropriate support can be planned. Rigorous analysis of performance data provides a clear picture of progress and achievement of cohorts, groups and individuals.
- The good curriculum is enriched when pupils are involved in imaginative activities: for example, when Year 4 pupils became archaeologists in a history lesson and discovered artefacts for themselves. Visits and visitors contribute extremely well to pupils' experiences. However links across the curriculum are not consistently planned so that pupils can apply the skills learned in one subject to another.
- Pastoral care is outstanding. All adults are keenly aware of each pupil's individuality and needs. Parents are consulted regularly about their children's progress and needs. Most parents reported that they were happy to bring their concerns to members of staff.

### *These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher successfully set out a vision for the future which is firmly and sensitively rooted in the needs of all pupils. The very efficient business manager works closely with the local authority's accounts manager to produce accurate budget monitoring information and ensure the smooth running of day-to-day financial procedures. The range of expertise within the governing body adds value to the school's strategic thinking. Whilst 'walking alongside' the leadership team, governors hold the school accountable for its progress against agreed priorities. The school has identified what needs to improve, developed successful strategies and met challenging targets to bring about significant improvements in pupils' attainment.
- Managers lead training and forge links with other schools to share ideas and solutions. Specialist secondary schools enhance pupils' experiences of sports and mathematics and good links have been established with the on-site kindergarten to ensure a smooth transition to school.
- The school makes sure that all groups of pupils are fully integrated. Care arrangements are well organised and contribute to the pupils' well-being. Parents' opinions are sought and contribute to school improvements.
- Pupils feel valued within the school community and they work with local organisations such as the police. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the United Kingdom is good, although their awareness of Europe and further afield, while satisfactory, is not as well developed.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are well behaved and enthusiastic about their learning. They make good progress from starting points expected for their age. They are able to write accurately and at length by the end of Reception and the children are immensely proud of their achievement.



- Areas set aside for reading, number work, role play and craft work, as well as the well-equipped outside area, enhance learning by providing a good balance of activities. Those led by adults have a clear focus on what the children are expected to learn and as a consequence, they develop securely their knowledge, skills and understanding. Activities chosen by children do not have the same level of purpose and therefore children are sometimes unclear about what they should be doing in these activities. There is no effective system for ensuring children have equal access to the available activities.
  
- The welfare of children is outstanding. All adults know the children and their needs well. Good relationships are forged between the school and parents. Routines are established quickly and children work and play cooperatively. They share resources and listen sensitively to each other.
  
- The EYFS is led and managed well. A common sense of purpose is shared amongst the adults. Good systems have been developed to regularly assess children's progress but staff do not consistently refer to them when planning the next steps in learning.

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?*	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?*	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?*	1
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	2

\* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

## Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents were positive in their responses to the inspection questionnaire. Most parents indicated that staff were approachable; their children enjoyed school; the management of the school was good; and the annual report on pupils' progress was informative. Almost a third of parental returns included additional positive comments. Where, in a very small minority of returns, parents expressed concerns, they were related to the slow speed of the local authority statementing process for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the extent to which incidents in the playground were dealt with to the satisfaction of the parent.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006–7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006–7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006–7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006–7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



14 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howley Grange Primary School, Halesowen, B62 0HS

Thank you for your warm welcome and help in our inspection of your school. We really enjoyed your archaeological dig in Year 4 and the newspaper office in Year 6. We thought you learned many essential skills in these lessons, including teamwork and investigation. One inspector also visited a class assembly and commented that this was, 'One of the best class assemblies I have ever seen,' so congratulations for producing work of such a high standard.

We think you go to a good school. Providing you continue to work hard, we are sure that the school's well-deserved reputation for achieving results well above those gained in other parts of the country will be maintained. Your behaviour is outstanding and you take on responsibilities and duties in a trustworthy manner. You also have lots of good ideas and we like the way that you contribute to some changes in school.

The staff look after you really well and make every effort to support, guide and care for you in a school that is safe. Adults also work very hard to make sure that you do your best most of the time. We were impressed by your interest in how learning progresses and your efforts in achieving targets.

We would like the school to track your progress even more carefully than it does at present, so that teachers can make sure you learn what you need in every lesson. We want you to have work that is neither too hard nor too easy but makes you think. We saw the excellent learning that took place in some of the exciting lessons I've already mentioned and we would like even more lessons like these so that learning is relevant and exciting for you. As you have so many ideas, we have asked your teachers to further listen to you so that with their initiatives too, the best are captured and developed.

We wish you and your teachers the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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