

Hob Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103833
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323908
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Watters 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Calder
Headteacher	Paul Longden
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2006
School address	Hob Green Road Pedmore Fields, Stourbridge West Midlands DY9 9EX
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and some parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of school documentation, including teachers' planning, schemes of work, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, and minutes from various meetings. Inspectors also looked at the responses from parents, staff and pupil questionnaires. 52% of parents or carers, a large majority of the staff and 87% of the pupils responded to inspection questionnaires.

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

- pupils' enjoyment and achievement
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the impact of the school's leadership in making sustained improvements
- the school's partnership with the community.

Information about the school

Hob Green is a community primary school and is situated close to Stourbridge in the West Midlands. The school has an individual needs centre, which caters for pupils from different areas in Dudley who have specific learning needs. Since the last inspection the school has opened a Children's Centre, which provides support and advice for parents, children and the community. The school no longer has registered status for children less than three years of age. There is a high proportion of pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs, 34%, compared with the national average of 20.7%. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally lower than typically expected for children of four years of age. It is much lower in language and literacy and personal and social development. The school has a number of awards, including Health Promoting School Level 3, Gold and Platinum awards for promoting Healthy Foods and the Eco Schools Bronze award.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Hob Green is an improving school which is laying positive and good foundations for further improvement. The headteacher is deservedly well respected and liked by all members of the school community and is impressive in his ambition to secure a better quality of education for all pupils. The senior leadership team give strong support to the headteacher, which he greatly appreciates. Together the team is improving its role in monitoring and evaluation, and what needs to be done to eliminate weaknesses in the school's performance. The school has an accurate view of its own performance, and its strategic plans for improvement are targeted well to tackle weaknesses. Nevertheless, the impact of the strong foundations that are in place is not yet sufficiently evident in sustained and measurable improvements, in relation to outcomes for pupils. In particular, their attainment, preparation for future economic well-being, quality of learning and rates of progress all remain satisfactory. Because of this the school's collective capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

While standards of attainment are broadly average and pupils' progress is satisfactory, there is too much variability between year groups and classes. Standards in writing and mathematics are too low for too many pupils, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2 and for the more able pupils. Achievement is also inconsistent, as is the quality of teaching and learning. Although all the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better, with a significant proportion that was good, some of the lessons were quite fragile. In these lessons pupils' progress was impeded by weaknesses in planning and assessment, and the pace of learning was too slow.

There is a developing sense of teamwork and team spirit, and morale is good. While all teachers are eager to improve their work, there is more to be done to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of how the impact of their work contributes to the school's overall effectiveness. There is not yet a sufficiently well embedded sense of individual accountability and collective responsibility, in relation to outcomes for pupils.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good, and a strong feature of the school's work. The pupils are unfailingly courteous and welcoming, and are developing impressive personal qualities, such as tolerance and cooperation, which are evident in their supportive and positive relationships. A significant reason for this strong picture is the good level of support, guidance and care which all staff provide for the pupils,

ensuring they feel safe and secure in the school community. This in turn is helping the pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem, and reflects well in their obvious enjoyment in coming to school. An achievers' assembly, led by the headteacher, with teachers and parents in attendance, demonstrated this extremely well. It was clear for all to see that adults and pupils enjoy working together and share a great sense of humour.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics by: making sure important skills and concepts are taught and understood, so that pupils have the best chance of succeeding in achieving lesson objectives.
- Improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching by: using assessment more effectively to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able; giving more time for direct teaching of important skills and knowledge and ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to work independently, applying their skills in challenging contexts.
- Increase the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation to eliminate the variability in teaching, learning and progress between year groups and classes by: using the outcomes of monitoring activities more effectively to tackle the causes of underperformance and low attainment and implementing a more systematic programme of checking outcomes for pupils in lessons, building on the sound levels of coaching and training for teachers already being introduced.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

The quality of pupils' learning and performance in the classroom is satisfactory overall, with some considerable variability between year groups and classes. The pupils enjoyed their learning and achieved well, making good gains in their knowledge and understanding when their work was motivating and interesting. They greatly appreciate it when teachers challenge them to do better and give them the tools to respond independently to the teachers' expectations. For example, the average ability Year 6 pupils gained great satisfaction when tackling mathematical problems, because their teacher explained carefully the steps they needed to follow in order to find the answers. However, these positive outcomes are not a consistent feature for all pupils. In too many cases the pupils are reticent in volunteering to contribute to whole-class sessions, because they do not have the skills and knowledge required to show success in their responses. This frustrates the pupils and leads many of them to be very reserved and passive. In turn their attainment is

lower and their progress slows. This is also evident in pupils' books and is one of the main reasons why their overall achievement and enjoyment is satisfactory and not good.

Standards in the 2008 end-of-key-stage tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were broadly average, and the majority of the pupils achieved satisfactorily. There is a gradual trend of rising standards in Key Stage 1, and in Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils made the expected two National Curriculum levels of progress between Year 3 and Year 6. The school's assessment information shows that current standards are also broadly average and that most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, there is significant variability between year groups and classes. Standards in writing and mathematics are too low in Key Stage 2, particularly for the more able pupils. The pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. There is no significant variation between the outcomes for boys and girls in their current work, although the boys do not do as well as the girls in writing.

Overall pupils are hard working and try to do their best. They feel safe because they are looked after well and adults treat them with respect. Their behaviour is good and they are extremely good humoured and polite. Many sought out inspectors to ask if any help was needed and to make them feel welcomed. The pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and local community, particularly through fund raising activities for charities, such as raising money for Dr Barnado's homes. Partnership work within the local community is developing well, and the school is fostering positive relationships with parents and carers. While pupils in the school council really enjoyed the work they did with local police to improve Wollescote Park, and managed a budget in the process, the opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning are not as frequent as many pupils would like. While the pupils' social and moral development is good, they have only a limited understanding of national and international affairs. Their knowledge and understanding of faiths and cultures different from their own, and what it means to be British in an increasingly diverse society, is also less well developed.

The pupils have a sound and developing knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle and many enjoy the regular opportunities for physical exercise. The Year 6 pupils talked openly and with sensitivity about personal hygiene and the negative impact of drugs. While pupils understand that eating healthy foods is important, too many choose unhealthy food at break and lunchtimes, despite the availability of alternative healthy options.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2

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

How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	3
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

The quality of the school's work

The majority of the teaching is satisfactory, with a significant proportion that is good. The best teaching is exemplified by teachers' high expectations, their good subject knowledge, effective questioning and careful instructions and explanations. These features are almost always supported by effective assessment which pitches the pupils' work carefully to their different starting points and capabilities. This also reflects well in targeted intervention for small groups, led by some support staff. As a result, the pupils achieve well. Nevertheless, this picture is not a consistent one in all year groups and classes. Teaching is less effective when expectations of academic achievement are too low and pupils are not taught effectively enough the skills and knowledge they need in order to succeed against the lesson objective. Similarly the lack of guidance given to teaching assistants often restricts the opportunities they have to make a more positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly during whole-class introductions.

All teachers carry out regular assessments of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics, but this information is not yet used consistently to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. For example, some classes use units of work that are related to the age of the pupils, but not their ability levels. The use of targets to raise achievement is also inconsistent. While some pupils know their targets, and can refer to them to help improve their work, too many are unsure about their targets and many could not tell inspectors what they were.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a good range of enrichment activities, for example before- and after-school clubs, opportunities to visit places of interest and the much-appreciated residential visit for pupils in Years 4 to 6.

Vulnerable pupils receive good support, particularly in relation to their personal and social development. Adults manage pupils extremely sensitively, both individually and in groups, such as in the Individual Needs Centre. A number of parents said that they really appreciated the kindness and support given to their children who find learning and positive emotional responses challenging.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	3

An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There is no doubting the headteacher's ambition to drive the school forward, and he communicates this effectively to all members of the school community. Staff questionnaire responses show overwhelming support for the school's leadership. The headteacher has high expectations for all and has ensured that the school is well placed to improve further. Working in close collaboration with the headteacher, the senior leadership team has led important initiatives to establish secure systems for monitoring and evaluation, for example, regularly checking pupils' work and teachers' planning, setting priorities in the school improvement plan, tracking pupils' progress and identifying weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. This is a secure platform for improvement. The challenge facing the school's leadership is to build successfully on these strong foundations, turning aspirations into real and tangible sustained improvements, particularly in relation to raising standards consistently in all year groups and classes, and eliminating underachievement and weaknesses in teaching.

The governing body provides satisfactory support for the school's leadership and is increasing its role in holding the school to account. This is shown mostly in the work of the curriculum and raising standards committee, which meets regularly to check how well the pupils are achieving.

The school satisfactorily promotes equality and tackles discrimination. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Overall the school makes sound use of the information it has about the pupils, although on occasions, expectations about pupils' performance are too low.

Safeguarding procedures are effective, and at the time of the inspection all safeguarding regulations and standards were met. Systems for quality assurance and risk assessments are well developed and the school works effectively in close collaboration with external agencies.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Pupils work harmoniously and accept each other's differences, but have a more limited knowledge of different faith groups and cultures represented in the national community. The school is beginning to evaluate the impact of its work to develop pupils' understanding of community cohesion, but this is not yet securely embedded nor sufficiently informing future plans for improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
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	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	3
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for children in the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory. From a low starting point, the children make reasonable progress overall and good progress to improve their personal and social skills. The children are happy and content and their progress is tracked carefully. They work and play together well but are not always sure what they are expected to do when given choices. Adults do not always give sufficient support to direct their learning. The strategic leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is shared by the headteacher and the Key Stage 1 coordinator, and they manage the provision satisfactorily. However, the lack of regular day-to-day contact with children and other adults in lessons means that improvement priorities are not always followed up sufficiently quickly or their impact evaluated rigorously enough.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. They gave strong endorsement and support for the work of the headteacher and greatly appreciate his leadership. A small number of responses indicated that the school did not always deal effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view, either in the school's records, discussions with pupils or during lessons and break times. Many parents and carers chose to write positively about the school and here are some examples.

- 'Hob Green is a great school! I have never before met such caring and dedicated people who do their job as it should be done.'
- 'If it wasn't for the help of the school my son's condition would probably have gone unnoticed and he would have just been another primary school child that had been expelled.'

- 'Hob Green has provided a safe and positive environment for my child. In a short period of time he has progressed beyond my expectations... the school has an exceptionally friendly atmosphere...'

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 2007-8, 15% 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 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% 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 2007-8, 5% 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.



12 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hob Green Primary School, Stourbridge, DY9 9EX

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school when we visited you recently. We were very impressed by how friendly and helpful you are and really enjoyed talking with you about your work and your life in school. Many of you made sure we were well looked after, particularly when we were finding our way to different classrooms, and that we had enough to eat and drink!

Your school looks after you really well, making sure you are safe and happy. We could see that you get on really well with Mr Longden, your teachers and all the other adults who help you in school. In the achievers' assembly you sang well and really appreciated being congratulated for your efforts and good behaviour. We were particularly impressed by how polite and good humoured you all are, and how hard you work.

We think that your school is very caring, and is helping you to behave well and feel good about yourselves. We have asked Mr Longden and all the adults who work with you to help you do even better in your work, particularly in your writing and mathematics, by making sure that:

- your lessons are always interesting and that your work is always challenging
- you are given more help to make sure you can understand and succeed in what your teachers ask you to do
- you have more opportunities to work in small groups and pairs, using your skills to solve problems
- your lessons are checked more carefully to make sure that you all make even more progress than you are doing at the moment.

Thank you again for being so kind, friendly and helpful. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters
Her Majesty's Inspector

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