

Hasland Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112663
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325656
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Brewer
Headteacher	Mrs Valley Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
School address	The Green Hasland Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 0LN
Telephone number	01246234250
Fax number	01246229681

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well the school has succeeded in raising standards in writing and what steps have been taken to maximise boys' performance in English
- whether the school strengthened curriculum provision for spiritual and cultural development and, if so, the extent to which this contributes to the school's efforts to promote community cohesion
- whether leadership and management structures are sufficiently robust to ensure that standards and quality are maintained during a phase of transition in headship and senior leadership team.

Evidence was gathered from classroom visits and from discussions with staff, pupils and governors. The inspector also examined pupils' work and school documents, especially assessment and safeguarding information. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school on the outskirts of Chesterfield. Most pupils are from White British families. Of the small proportion with minority ethnic backgrounds, few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to that in schools nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also broadly average, although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is relatively high for a school of this size. The school moved to new buildings in September 2007 and shares a site with the local secondary school. A new headteacher came to the school in September 2008.

The school holds many nationally accredited awards that recognise the quality of aspects of its work. These include: The Basic Skills Quality Mark and Artsmark; Healthy Schools and International Schools status; Investors in People, the Anti-Bullying Campaign and ECO Green Flag awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hasland Junior School is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent education for its pupils, most of whom attain exceptionally high standards in relation both to their academic and personal development. The school has the strong support and approval of the vast majority of parents. Comments such as: 'The staff are all fantastic - great motivators', 'The work my daughter receives fits her talents - children are always challenged to do their best' and 'A beautiful school, full of great teachers, who really understand the needs of the children they care for' are typical of the views of many.

The school has undergone significant change during the last year. Not only has the school moved to new premises, but there has also been the appointment of a new headteacher and other changes to the senior leadership team and to the teaching staff. It is a testimony to the outstanding strength of the school's leadership, past and present, that these changes have not deflected the school from its core purpose of providing the best possible quality of education for its pupils. Governors have also played a major part in 'steadying the ship' through their rigorous and measured approach to the management of these changes. The recently appointed headteacher has brought a fresh vision for the future development of the school and is rapidly gaining the confidence and respect of staff, parents and pupils. In these early days and weeks, she has been aided by the school's existing strong and highly effective management systems. Leaders and managers at all levels have a well-established role in school self-evaluation and in planning for school improvement. The school has continued to set highly challenging targets for pupils and staff alike, and principles of accountability are thoroughly embedded in the school's work. Consequently, there has been no let-up in the drive to maintain and/or improve both standards and quality. This culture of striving for excellence in all aspects of the school's work means that the school provides excellent value for money and has an exceptionally strong capacity to improve further in the future.

Standards are exceptionally high. Standards have risen steadily since the previous inspection. In the 2007 national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards in English were well above the national average and standards in mathematics and science were exceptionally high. In relation to broadly average attainment on entry, these results represent excellent progress and achievement. Indeed, the school was in the top 1% nationally for value added in Key Stage 2, because pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds made significantly more than the normally expected rate of progress in Years 3 to 6. Preliminary results for 2008 and the school's tracking data indicate that similarly high standards and exceptional progress have been maintained.

Despite excellent overall results, the previous inspection noted that standards in writing were holding back overall scores for English. The school has tackled this issue by making improvements to the curriculum that place a greater emphasis on the systematic promotion of writing skills in all subjects. This development is already having a beneficial impact. However, whilst the gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed and standards in writing have risen above those in schools nationally, they remain lower than those in reading and in other core subjects. To combat this relative weakness, the school has introduced the structured teaching of phonics (letters and sounds), in order to build more systematically on the work of the infant school. This initiative is well conceived, but has not yet had time to affect spelling and overall standards in writing throughout the school.

Pupils learn exceptionally well, because teaching and the curriculum are outstanding. Lessons are lively and engaging. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and, as a result, their teaching is clear, accurate and authoritative. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response and of their capacity to cope with challenging work. They use the information from the regular assessments that they make to set tasks that closely match pupils' abilities and prior attainments and to set personal targets that help pupils to improve. The curriculum is exceptionally rich. It meets fully national curriculum requirements and is forward looking in its provision for modern languages throughout Key Stage 2. The particular strengths of the curriculum lie in the high quality learning experiences that it provides for all pupils. Educational visits, such as those to the Peak District, Eden Camp, Haddon Hall and Southwell workhouse, along with visitors and special events in school, like Spanish day and Victorian day, enliven every term and do much to promote positive attitudes. Together with the extensive range of out-of-school activities, they promote high levels of enjoyment and achievement across the curriculum. Indeed, when talking about their lessons, pupils described them as 'inspiring' and 'fun'.

Pastoral care is of a high quality. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and have confidence in the adults who care for them. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being in school are rigorous and thorough. Academic guidance is also highly effective. Challenging personal targets and regular reviews ensure that pupils know exactly how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education also permeates the curriculum. This results in outstanding outcomes in terms of pupils' personal development and well-being and in the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils show respect and courtesy to others, and their behaviour is excellent. Consequently, the school functions as an extremely harmonious community. In this area, school councillors and peer mentors make a strong contribution. Pupils also contribute to the wider community, for example through the giving of harvest gifts to local residents or Christmas gifts to orphaned children. Furthermore, they join with students from the neighbouring secondary school to perform music and drama in the community. Their eco-projects, fair trade weeks and internationally based initiatives, such as the Maths Challenge, give pupils a strong global view and have strengthened their understanding of people from other cultures and walks of life. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development has strengthened since the last inspection. Pupils are also extremely well versed in safe and healthy lifestyles. Most develop an excellent work ethic. They work hard, strive to succeed and show pride in their achievements. These attributes, along with the high standards that they attain, prepare them exceptionally well for their on-going education and for their lives as young adults.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good start that teachers have made in teaching phonics, in order to raise standards in writing further.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hasland Junior School, Chesterfield, S41 0LN.

You may remember that I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making me so welcome and for taking time to talk to me and to answer my questions. I particularly enjoyed seeing your wonderful new school building and talking to the school councillors and peer mentors. I thought that you would like to hear what I found out about your school.

There are many outstandingly good things happening in your school:

- Almost all of you make excellent progress in English, mathematics and science and overall standards are very high.
- You thoroughly enjoy school because teachers, educational visits, visitors and special events make learning exceptionally interesting and enjoyable.
- You get on wonderfully well with one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe and give you excellent advice about your work.
- Mrs Lambert, the staff, governors and pupils work hard to make your school a better place.

There is not much that needs to be improved at Hasland Juniors but, because Mrs Lambert, quite rightly, wants everything to be perfect, there will always be something that she wants you to do just a little bit better. That is why your school is so good. I know that you have recently been having special lessons to help you to use phonics (letters and sounds) to improve your spelling and the overall quality of your writing. I have asked the teachers to keep at it for a while longer so that the benefit shows in all of your work.

I hope that you will all continue to work hard and enjoy your time at Hasland Juniors.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector