

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117368
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326589
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Yates

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	479
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Andrew Payne
Headteacher	Mr Richard Haynes
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Peascroft Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 8ER
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. Pupils come from a broad range of cultural backgrounds, although the majority are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is slightly higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children aged from three to five years old in the school's Foundation Unit. Children start the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are broadly at the levels expected for their age.

The school has been awarded the Activemark and is an Investor in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Excellent attention is paid to the care pupils receive and to their well-being. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure in their surroundings so that their personal development is outstanding. Relationships are excellent and a warm welcome is extended to all. Parents are highly complimentary about all that the school provides. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'Our children are happy in school'. The staff at Hobbs Hill genuinely care about their pupils and make learning enjoyable.' Many parents attend weekly reading mornings, which help them to be better informed as to how they may participate in their children's learning. Additional partnerships, for example with local schools and sports partnerships, also make very strong contributions to pupils' well-being.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they benefit from two full years in the setting. Staff and children in the Nursery enjoy very generous space and good resources in the new purpose-built accommodation. A great focus on linking sounds and letters throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in improved scores in communication, language and literacy. Assessments at the end of Year 2 and results from national tests for Year 6 show that pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2008 was considerably higher than the previous two years.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their keen participation in activities. They are very polite, friendly and considerate and relate very well to others. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, and of how to keep themselves safe. They thrive on the additional responsibilities given, such as the daily collection of waste paper from classrooms and talk knowledgeably about how it will be recycled to protect our environment.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although it is not consistently so. As a result, some lessons contain more challenge for pupils than others. In the best lessons, there is a good balance between teacher and pupil participation, which results in a brisk pace of learning. The quality of the curriculum is good and it is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities. Attractive displays are key features both in classrooms and corridors. Close links are made across many subjects.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are very experienced and know the school well. Together with the governing body they have been successful in bringing about improvement since the last inspection. At present, there is no consistent programme for the direct monitoring of teaching and learning by key subject leaders, to give them a clear understanding of all pupils' standards and progress. Consequently, the opportunity for them to have a comprehensive overview and to help colleagues to improve their teaching is limited. While the school's evaluation of itself is a little generous there is a good capacity to improve. The school caters well for the full range of groups in the community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In the Nursery and Reception classes, good teaching, detailed planning and clear expectations support learning and development well and promote good progress. Children's welfare is a top

priority and staff respond very sensitively to the needs of each individual so that children are very confident to approach adults. Children's personal development is good and is enhanced by a good balance of activities directed by adults and those chosen by the children. Staff have high expectations of children's ability to work independently and even the youngest children confidently access equipment which they use appropriately in cooperation with their peers. All staff use good questioning strategies to encourage children to think hard about their learning. Consequently, children speak confidently and are developing a wide vocabulary. They get off to a good start in reading and writing because of the strong emphasis placed on teaching the relationship between letters and sounds. The outdoor area provides many exciting activities that support learning effectively. Leadership and management are good and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They record children's progress carefully and use assessments well to plan the next steps in learning. They are very well aware of the children's abilities, the strengths in their learning and where they might need support. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is currently working to improve the numbers of children achieving the higher levels in their learning. By the end of the Reception Year, children's standards reach those expected and in some years they exceed expectations. In 2008, standards were above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by ensuring that all pupils are well challenged in lessons.
- Extend the work of subject leaders for English and mathematics to include their involvement in a regular programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and in the comprehensive evaluation of pupils' standards and progress across all year groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 they attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also achieve well through Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, national test results for 2008 indicate standards were above average overall and well above average in reading. While variations occur between year groups, current pupils are maintaining above average standards and progress continues to be good from their starting points. The school is quick to identify borderline pupils and swiftly puts into place a range of support strategies to help them to meet their targets. Pupils who find learning difficult, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely caring and supportive of each other. Their social development is excellent. Behaviour in and outside lessons is exemplary. Pupils work and play together very happily. They respect and trust teachers and other adults, so that they make good progress in their work. They thoroughly enjoy school and the overall pattern of attendance is good. The school places a high emphasis on safe practices and healthy lifestyles. Consequently, pupils have an excellent understanding of eating healthy food, adopting safe practices and keeping fit. Pupils respond well to the caring staff who work hard as a team to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The strong emphasis on emotional well-being allows them to develop a good understanding of how to express and manage their feelings. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council. They choose to support various charities through issues they become aware of, for example, child poverty in Africa and they have also given support to cancer research charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good and it is enhanced by a wide range of multicultural activities. The school has close contacts with the local community and pupils show a good understanding of the beliefs and values of others. They are well prepared for their next schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively so that all groups of pupils, including those who need additional support, make good progress. Most lessons are taught well. As a result, pupils make good progress overall. Computers and electronic whiteboards are used effectively to support learning and have a positive impact on the quality of lessons. Classrooms are quiet, calm and industrious; these features contribute to pupils' good enjoyment of learning. Many teachers use initial and supplementary questions effectively to develop learning, challenge and sustain interest. However, in some lessons teaching lacks pace and challenge. There is an imbalance between teachers' and pupils' contributions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad curriculum which focuses on the all round development of its pupils. It matches pupils' needs well and enables them to make good progress in their learning. The revised national frameworks for literacy and numeracy are being adapted and implemented effectively to meet the school's requirements. The use made of information and communication technology is a strength and supports pupils' learning across the curriculum and contributes to their enjoyment of school. The recently introduced 'creative learning journey' captures the pupils' interest as teachers link the different subjects together around a theme or topic. The school is in the process of reviewing and refining the planning to ensure greater consistency between year groups. Supplementary materials to support pupils who find learning difficult are used effectively, enabling them to make good progress. Good standards in art are evident in the many colourful displays around the school. There are particular strengths in music and physical education. French is taught to all pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The curriculum is enhanced effectively through a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. These support their personal development effectively. The carefully chosen elements of the social and emotional aspects of learning programme contribute much to pupils' well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the care, guidance and support pupils receive is outstanding. The school places high importance on ensuring the well-being of its pupils. Health and safety procedures are

firmly established and undertaken methodically. The school meets the latest legislative requirements for safeguarding.

Systems for recording and analysing data are well established and used effectively to identify pupils who require additional support. Teachers use day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning well in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets and are progressively developing their skills in evaluating their own work. Oral feedback is helpful so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work. There are some examples of good informative and developmental marking, which tends to be strongest in English. Nevertheless, there is room to strengthen the written feedback in other subjects so that this information is shared regularly, both with the pupils and their parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management are contributing to good pupil achievement. The school benefits greatly from the hard work and dedication of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who are committed to improving the school further. Together they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of the areas for development. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the work of subject leaders further so that they become more effective in aspects of their roles. Subject leaders in English and mathematics do not monitor teaching and learning regularly to gain a comprehensive and direct overview and greater understanding of exactly how well pupils are doing in all age ranges.

Governors are committed and supportive and work tirelessly to ensure the budget is wisely spent. Resources within the school and the outside environment are of high quality and good use is made of outside expertise to enhance learning. The school engages effectively with a wide range of communities so that pupils have a good understanding of the issues in the local and the wider community. The administrative team work efficiently so that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the premises are very well maintained.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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 children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	1

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	2
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8ER.

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You all look so smart in your uniforms. Your views were very helpful in giving us a picture of your school.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- Your school is a very happy place where everyone is welcomed.
- All the staff look after you extremely well and make your lessons interesting.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- You all get on extremely well; you are very polite and kind to one another.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to your parents, your school and yourselves.
- You make good progress and reach standards that are above average.

There are two things the school can work on to make it better.

- Ensure that all of the teaching is always of the highest possible quality so that you make even better progress.
- Ensure that the teachers responsible for English and mathematics have more opportunities to find out how well you are doing.

We wish you well for the future and hope you continue to enjoy coming to school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen Yates

Lead inspector