

Highley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123371
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	327893
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	216
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	Clive Williams
Headteacher	Derval Carey-Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Grasmere Drive Highley Bridgnorth WV16 6EH
Telephone number	01746 861541
Fax number	01746 861541

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin, but a small proportion represents a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, but of these very few have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils' needs cover a wide range, but are mainly speech and language, behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. The school admits children into its Reception class in September or January depending on their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

While pupils' personal development is satisfactory and the school has successfully raised attendance to average levels, the school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education because teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make adequate progress in their learning. The school's efforts to improve teaching since the last inspection have been ineffectual. As a result, standards have declined over the last three years and too many pupils are now failing to achieve in line with their potential. Leadership and management are inadequate and lack the effectiveness to secure the improvements required to raise standards and help pupils achieve more.

Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. Their literacy skills are sometimes less secure. Sound teaching and an appropriate range of activities help them to make satisfactory progress in their Reception Year. Children reach broadly average standards and attain all the early learning goals by the end of Reception, in all but their writing. Following this sound start, ineffective curriculum planning, uninspiring teaching and a general lack of challenge in too many lessons, particularly for more able pupils, result in pupils making inadequate progress in Years 1 to 6. In the 2008 teacher assessments, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average. The provisional data from 2008 show that standards in Year 6 are below average in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties have regular additional support, but this support is not effective in helping them to achieve satisfactorily. The school's data show that in many classes, there is considerable underachievement among all pupils, but particularly the more able.

There is some good teaching in the school but in too many lessons, teachers fail to use their assessment information to match work closely to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils frequently all undertake the same tasks, regardless of their ability. Expectations of the more able are not high enough, and work is too difficult for those who need additional help. In addition, pupils, particularly the more able, have too few opportunities to work independently in order to extend their skills. Thus, teaching and the curriculum are inadequate. The school's targets are not challenging enough to raise standards. Too many pupils fail to develop key skills to the levels required to prepare them adequately for the future.

The headteacher and staff provide a calm, friendly environment where pupils feel safe, behave well and enjoy school. The school is particularly effective at supporting individual pupils who face difficult social and emotional issues. Pupils have a good understanding of living safe and healthy lifestyles and make a good contribution to the community. The school promotes effective links with other communities, at home and abroad. All child protection procedures are secure. Care, guidance and support arrangements overall are inadequate because not enough is done to help pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils do not have the guidance they require to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The school's view of itself is optimistic. Leaders have not tackled the issue of declining standards successfully. They have introduced appropriate procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress

to identify where pupils fall behind. Senior managers analyse this information to set targets and allocate additional support, but fail to check that all teachers challenge pupils appropriately. Subject leaders do not check that pupils build successfully on what they can already do. The monitoring of teaching is regular but weak. Procedures to evaluate provision generally lack rigour. The school failed to reach any of the targets it set itself this year. Governors, while supportive, have not held the school to account regarding pupils' progress. They play a limited role in checking the school's performance and driving school improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and appropriate welfare arrangements help children make a sound start to their learning and personal development. Staff take appropriate account of children's individual needs and support them sensitively within a safe and secure environment. Staff foster good relationships between home and school and encourage parents to support their children's learning at home.

Leadership and management of provision in the Reception class are satisfactory. All the adults involved work together to plan teaching and learning. A satisfactory balance of adult-led tasks and those that children choose for themselves encourage children to try new things. Staff make sure that children try everything, and gently guide them through activities that they sometimes find challenging, for example writing. Children enjoy learning and are happy to attempt tasks on their own. They particularly like imaginative play and independent time where they develop their ideas and discover things for themselves. Staff make regular assessments of children's progress and more able children sometimes work with the Year 1 pupils in their class. While regular use is made of the school's extensive grounds, the lack of a secure outdoor area with appropriate play equipment for climbing and exploring, hinders greater independence, especially in children's creative and physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to improve rates of progress and raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, ensure teaching uses information from assessments to challenge all pupils at the right level and provides those needing additional help with high quality support.
- Improve the curriculum so that it offers all pupils, particularly the more able, further opportunities to work independently.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that all teachers set challenging targets and give pupils clear guidance as to how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Make sure that leaders at all levels monitor the school's work rigorously and take effective action to drive school improvement.
- Provide children in the Reception class with a secure outdoor area to support their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupil progress is inconsistent at both key stages and achievement is inadequate overall. Although progress is good in some classes where teaching is effective, elsewhere teaching is not demanding enough to secure an acceptable rate of progress. Too many pupils are underachieving. Few pupils attain the higher levels because teachers' expectations of the more able, in particular, are too low. At the end of Year 6, standards are particularly low in English and science in relation

to pupils' attainment on entry. Pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills at length or to work independently, for example on investigations. Pupils' low literacy skills prevent them from explaining ideas confidently. As a result, their progress is hampered in subjects such as mathematics and science. The recent introduction of suitable word-building strategies in Reception and Key Stage 1 is having a positive impact on developing pupils' literacy skills but it is too early to measure the rate of improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties do not have the quality of support they need to achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They are polite and friendly and willingly help others. They form good relationships and trust the adults that work with them. They behave well and listen attentively. Most work hard, although a few do lose concentration when lessons lack interest and challenge. They understand well the importance of living safe, healthy lifestyles. Many select healthy lunches, attend the sports clubs the school offers, and are well aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils take on responsibilities, for example looking after younger ones at lunchtimes, and school council members make decisions regarding fundraising. Through organising concerts and other events in the village, pupils contribute well to the local community. They have many opportunities to explore other cultures and religions, and so develop a sound understanding of life in modern Britain. Despite some of these good aspects, pupils' preparation for their future lives and education is limited by the relatively low attainment in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

In the classes where teaching is good, teachers plan interesting activities, offer relevant challenge and provide the right support to help pupils achieve well. However, in too many lessons, pupils do not learn enough because the pace of learning is too slow and expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Frequently, lessons are based on uninspiring tasks that pupils of all abilities do, regardless of their individual learning needs, because teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils of differing ability can do. As a result, many pupils make inadequate progress. More able pupils rightly say they could do harder work. Too much direction from teachers and too few opportunities for pupils, particularly the more able, to work independently to develop their own ideas and approaches, result in a few losing concentration or interest. Teaching assistants provide regular support to those who need it but the work provided is not always matched well enough to these pupils' specific needs. For example, these pupils frequently experience whole-class sessions that are beyond their capability and, as a result, they fail to make adequate progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

While the curriculum covers all the required subjects and includes French, it fails to help pupils make adequate progress in their learning. It is not planned well enough to meet the needs of all the ability groups in each class. It provides insufficient challenge to the more able, and

activities to support those who have difficulties in learning are not always effective. Often, the activities teachers plan fail to build successfully on what pupils already know and can do. The planning often focuses on covering information and completing tasks rather than extending pupils' skills through more independent activities. Consequently, too many pupils underachieve. A few teachers link subjects through topics that pupils find engaging, but the practice is inconsistent across the school. Provision for information and communication technology has improved and pupils use computers regularly to support their learning. A good personal, social and health education programme successfully supports pupils' personal development. The school organises a good range of out-of-school trips, visits, visitors and clubs to enrich learning and experience life beyond the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Child protection and health and safety procedures are all secure, as are the procedures to ensure that adults who come into contact with pupils are vetted appropriately. Pupils who have social or emotional needs are supported sensitively, with external agencies involved where necessary. Pupils are confident that adults in the school will listen to them if they have any worries.

Academic guidance and support are inadequate. The school has systems to check each pupil's progress but the information is not used well enough to set targets that reflect their attainment accurately. For example, pupils in some classes have literacy targets but cannot explain what they have to do to achieve these targets or how they will recognise it when they are successful. While marking in one or two classes is good in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work, the practice is inconsistent. Some teachers fail to check that pupils respond in their subsequent work to any guidance given and thus ensure pupils' work improves.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leaders and managers have not taken the prompt and rigorous action required to improve provision and to raise the performance of pupils and teachers. This has resulted in pupils' continued underachievement. The school's monitoring identifies significant weaknesses in teaching and its assessment procedures identify where pupils make inadequate progress. All teachers have this information and have had relevant support and training to help improve their practice. Despite this, a few continue to underperform. Leaders have not done enough to hold these teachers to account regarding pupil progress in their classes. In addition, some fail to follow the school's guidelines, for example regarding planning, marking and target setting. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are weak at all levels and the actions that the school has taken to improve provision have not arrested the decline in standards. Governors have not questioned or challenged sufficiently the information provided by senior leaders regarding pupil progress, standards and other aspects of the school's work. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Staff work hard to engage with parents, the local community and agencies to support pupils' well-being, and to promote their awareness of the diverse communities.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highley Community Primary School, Bridgnorth, WV16 6EH

You may remember that two inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for making us welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I am writing to tell you what we found out. We enjoyed talking with you. Your behaviour is good and you work and play together sensibly. You try your best but we agree with those of you who said you could do harder work. You explained how you raise money for charity and what you know about people from other cultures and faiths. You said that you like going on trips and that you have lots of friends at school.

While some things about the school are satisfactory, such as the start given to you in Reception, and many aspects of your personal development are good, we think that the school needs extra help to improve so that you can do better in your work. We have asked the headteacher and the staff to do a number of things to improve your school. Inspectors will come back regularly to check if things are improving.

You could achieve higher standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, so we have asked teachers to help you with this. We have said that they should make all your lessons interesting and give you work that really challenges you. For example, it would help you to have more activities that you can do on your own. Teachers need to check that as you move through each class, you do the right work to help you extend your knowledge and skills appropriately. We have asked teachers to set you challenging targets that you understand and that when they mark your work, they explain what you need to do to improve. We have asked the school to make sure children in the Reception class have their own play area with climbing apparatus and activities that they can use to help them develop their creative play and to exercise. All these improvements need to happen as quickly as possible. This means that the school's leaders need to check up on how well all the teachers and other adults who work with you are helping you to learn. This is why your school will have extra help.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you ask for harder work if it is too easy and make sure you follow the advice teachers give you when they mark your work.

Thank you once again for helping us.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector