

Hob Hill CofE/Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124291
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328098
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	186
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	Steve Lynch
Headteacher	Ben Preston
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Armitage Lane Brereton Rugeley WS15 1ED

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2009
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Telephone number
Fax number

01889 256145
01889 256145

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Hob Hill is a smaller than average primary school. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. These difficulties lie mainly in the areas of moderate learning, language, speech and communication. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Nursery and Reception. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

A private company, in partnership with the school, offers before and after school provision. This provision was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hob Hill is a good school that has made considerable improvements since the last inspection. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Across the school, pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Effective care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils.

Good leadership and management have contributed significantly to the improved provision and the good outcomes for pupils. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has gained the confidence and respect of pupils, parents and staff. Teamwork among the staff is strong and there is a clear commitment to improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is much sharper than at the time of the last inspection and is now good. Senior leaders use the findings of self-evaluation well to plan and bring about needed improvements. Effective systems to assess and track pupils' attainment have been established. Improvements to assessment, teaching and the curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Governors are well informed about the school's performance. They offer constructive challenge as well as providing good support. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Parents hold positive views about the school and give it their support. Most are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The positive ethos, pupils' progress, additional activities and approachability receive particular praise. Typical parental comments from the questionnaires were, 'Great atmosphere and lots of support', 'Wide range of after-school clubs' and 'The headteacher and staff are very approachable'. Parents are also pleased with the changes that the headteacher has brought about.

Pupils' personal development and well-being have been maintained and built upon since the last inspection. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their keen participation in activities. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and relate well to others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices. They make positive contributions to the school and wider community. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for the future.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. Positive steps are being taken to improve pupils' performance in science but it is too soon for these to have had a full impact. Although practical investigative work is being increased, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils in this area. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum contribute to pupils' good progress. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Teachers' demonstrations, instructions and questioning promote learning effectively.

Assessment is usually used well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils are challenged well and they make good gains in their learning. Occasionally, lessons lack pace and some tasks are too teacher-directed so pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently. Pupils are set clear learning targets in literacy and numeracy so they know how to improve. This good practice is less well developed in science. A good range of additional activities enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with the knowledge and skills typically expected, except in communication and language, where a significant number enter with lower skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there have been good improvements to this area since the last inspection. Good teaching, careful attention to welfare and an interesting range of learning activities enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. They make good gains in their personal and social development because of the good relationships established between adults and children. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and the activities provided. Speaking and listening are successfully incorporated into all activities. There are effective strategies to develop early reading skills. Children's reading skills are further supported by the productive partnership with parents. Children make good gains in physical development because of the outdoor activities provided. The increased focus on practical activities is having a positive impact on the progress of boys. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led activities and those that allow children to explore, be creative and work independently. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are continuing to strengthen assessment procedures, including providing a more comprehensive assessment of children's skills on entry. By the end of Reception, standards are just above average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in science by extending investigative work and establishing individual learning targets for pupils in science.
- Ensure that all lessons proceeded at a good pace and provide opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well as they progress through the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 fluctuate because of variations in the attainment of relatively small year groups. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. National test results and pupils' work indicate that standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics has improved from satisfactory to good because of the action taken by the school. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make good progress because of the well-targeted support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning. They are courteous, friendly and helpful to others. As the pupils reported, 'Everyone is friendly here and new people fit in straight away'. Attendance is improving and levels are now closer to average. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and participate in a range of physical exercise. They show a good knowledge and understanding of healthy diets. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well and have contributed to improvements to the outdoor facilities. Members also played a valuable part in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher for September. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community by raising funds for national and global charities.

At Hob Hill, pupils are well prepared for the future because they are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. In addition to this, their personal and social skills are well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

One typical comment from a parent was, 'Pleased with the teaching at Hob Hill' and the pupils said, 'Lessons are fun, we learn new things'. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. They are attentive and respond positively to teachers' clear and informative demonstrations and explanations. Questioning is used well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of new work. Teachers usually use assessment information well to tailor activities and tasks to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are challenged, their interest is sustained and they make good progress. At times, the pace of learning slows because teachers' introductions are too long and pupils are keen to tackle the main task. Opportunities for pupils to plan and work independently are occasionally missed because the activities are too adult directed. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional support with literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and contributes well to their personal development and well-being. Provision for English and mathematics is effective and this has a positive impact on achievement and standards in these subjects. The school is taking positive measures to improve provision and raise pupils' performance in science. The planning and arrangements for science are improving. There is already greater emphasis on investigative work, although the school recognises that there is still more to do. A wide range of additional activities are provided and these are much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Popular clubs include art and craft, choir, cricket, dance, football, information and communication technology (ICT) and recorders. A successful residential visit for pupils in Years 6 provides exciting outdoor opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and to work together in teams. Health and safety education is promoted effectively across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good pastoral care and the school's very positive ethos underpin pupils' good personal development and well-being. Good partnerships have been established with parents, the church and outside agencies. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and safe are effective. Pupils feel well cared for and are confident that there is always an adult to whom they can turn if they are upset or have a problem. As a parent wrote, 'My children are well cared for and feel safe'. Effective strategies have been devised to monitor and promote pupils' attendance, which is now rising. Good behaviour is achieved through clear expectations from staff and by the good relationships established. Pupils with specific needs receive good support and have full access to the curriculum and activities. Academic guidance for pupils is good and much improved since the last inspection. Pupils are set specific learning targets in literacy and numeracy and so they know what they need to do to improve. As a parent commented, 'We are kept up to

date with targets set by teachers'. However, this good target setting is not so well established in science.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear educational direction and is sharply focused on improving provision and raising achievement. He has fostered good teamwork and a commitment to improvement among the staff. Leadership roles and responsibilities have been distributed more widely amongst the staff, developing the school's capacity to improve. Self-evaluation is good and much improved since the last inspection. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and take effective action to bring about improvements. There have been good improvements to assessment, teaching and the curriculum. More rigorous assessment and tracking systems mean that all staff have an accurate view of how well each pupil is doing. The changes have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics. In the drive for improvement, the school has made good use of local authority advisers and consultants. Leaders are aware that there is more to do to raise achievement in science.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves. There are strong partnerships with the Anglican and Methodist church communities. The school has worked hard on extending its partnership with parents and this is having a positive effect on parents' support for their children's learning. Parents help with the school's reading programme, and the child/parent ICT club is an interesting initiative. Different cultures and religions are promoted well through the school's curriculum. The before- and after-school provision is much appreciated by working parents.

The governors are actively involved in the work of the school. They offer constructive challenge and provide strong support. They are rightly pleased with the school's improvements.

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?	2
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?	2
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?	2
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	2
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	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?	2

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**

10 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hob Hill C of E/Methodist Primary School, Rugeley, WS15 1ED.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. There have been good improvements since the last inspection.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and the activities provided.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- Your school is a friendly and pleasant place to learn in.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and you get on well with others.
- A good range of learning activities is provided, including clubs and visits.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take good care of you and provide good support.
- The school is well led by your headteacher and he receives good support from other staff.
- The school has good partnerships with parents and the community.

There are two areas the school has been asked to look at and make further improvements.

- Some of you could make better progress in science by having more practical investigative work and by having clear targets to guide your learning.
- At times, teachers could ensure that the lesson moves on at a faster pace and give you more chances to work independently. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts Lead inspector