

Hope Hamilton CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133962
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	328781
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	303
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	Kate Helm
Headteacher	Jacqueline Farnell
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	Sandhills Avenue North Hamilton Leicester LE5 1LU
Telephone number	0116 2766121
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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 an average-sized primary school. Approximately three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Indian origin. Over 40% of the pupils speak English as an additional language and a small number are at an early stage of English acquisition. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils' needs cover a wide range, but are mainly in the category of speech and language, emotional and behavioural, and moderate learning difficulties. The turnover of pupils is high with an above average number of pupils either leaving or joining the school other than at the normal times. No child has been at the school for more than four years and over half have only been in the school for two years. The school has grown considerably since it first opened in 2004. There are 75 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The school's calm and supportive ethos helps pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. Pupils form very good relationships and good harmony prevails between the many cultures and faiths represented in the school. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to them if they have any worries. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their exemplary behaviour and their enthusiasm to learn and achieve. Most parents are positive about the school and appreciate how well the school helps the many pupils who join during the year to settle quickly.

Achievement across the school is good. Children start in the Nursery with attainment levels below those typical at this age. The many exciting activities and experiences help them to grow in confidence and independence. Consequently, they make a good start to their learning. Current children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are working at average standards. Overall, good teaching ensures that pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6. Standards, however, are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Although the high number of pupils joining the school during the year frequently cause interruptions in their learning, most pupils achieve well from a wide variety of starting points because the school helps them to settle quickly. Standards at the end of Year 6 show steady improvement over the last three years and current pupils in Year 6 are working at close to average levels in reading and mathematics. The school has taken effective action to improve provision for writing and pupils are working at higher standards this year than in 2008. Pupils are organised in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes for all lessons. Teachers accommodate pupils' differing needs well in the vast majority of lessons and so learning is good. Occasionally, teachers' presentations are too demanding for lower attaining pupils and do not extend the more able enough. In these lessons, the overall pace of learning is no better than satisfactory. Pupils who learn English as an additional language and those who find learning difficult achieve well because they receive good individual support. The curriculum is good overall, and a very good range of additional activities enrich learning well. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the cultures and traditions in the world beyond the immediate locality are less well developed. Pastoral care arrangements are good. Teachers provide pupils with challenging but realistic targets and sound advice on how to improve their work.

Good leadership and management have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher involves staff and governors in evaluating the school's performance and identifying improvement priorities. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously. Senior leaders recognise that, while overall standards are improving, progress is better in some classes than others. Many managers are still relatively new to their roles so they have not had enough time to ensure pupils achieve well in all classes. Nevertheless, leaders are largely accurate in evaluating the quality of the school's work. With standards showing steady improvement at Key Stage 2, the school's leaders have good capacity to make further improvements. While governors are supportive, they are less involved in monitoring the school's performance and holding teachers to account regarding the progress pupils make in their classes. Despite the school's good efforts, a few parents keep their children off school too often and this impedes their progress. Good links with local communities and nearby schools support pupils' personal and academic progress well. Links with the wider world, both at home and abroad, are less well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff have high expectations and provide children with the right support to gain confidence quickly. Children's well-being is a high priority, particularly as many join the school through the year and occasionally find it difficult to settle into the well-established routines. Those who need individual guidance receive it promptly because the care and welfare arrangements are good. Children are very happy in their work and play, and relate well to others. Their behaviour is excellent. They attempt new activities enthusiastically and ask questions when they are unsure. Sensitive management and timely interventions from staff allow children to grow and thrive. Older children, acting as excellent role models, are quick to help younger ones. Clear routines and a well-ordered environment help children feel safe even when tasks are challenging. For example, children listened very attentively in order to spell accurately words like 'theft', 'thank you' and 'faint'. Parents praise the school for the way it supports their children, making comments such as, 'My child can't wait to get here.' Parents are confident they can discuss any concerns with staff and say that staff are very helpful.

Leadership and management are good and all staff are involved in planning and teaching. Staff assess children closely by observing and talking to them about their work. Independent tasks are balanced carefully with those led by staff. Children delight in exploring the well-organised, imaginative activities. As children's literacy and numeracy skills are often the weakest areas when they start school, these are taught particularly well to help children make rapid gains. Staff use classrooms, computers and other resources well to extend children's learning. The use of the outside spaces is not as well developed to extend children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers plan work that matches pupils' needs accurately in all classes in order to increase achievement and raise standards quickly.
- Encourage all parents to send their children to school regularly.
- Promote pupils' awareness and understanding of the wider world both in this country and abroad.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good achievement seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage is maintained in Years 1 to 6. Teachers know how much progress is expected of pupils in their classes and most ensure this happens. In the 2008 teacher assessments, Year 2 pupils attained below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Current Year 2 pupils are working at similar levels. Pupils in Year 6 are working at close to average levels. At both key stages, reading is a strength because pupils' word-building skills are developed well. Writing standards are not as good but effective strategies are in place to remedy this. Current Year 6 pupils are working at higher levels than the Year 6 pupils attained in 2008. The action taken to improve pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills has started to have an impact on raising standards in mathematics. Pupils who need extra help with their learning receive this support and achieve well. Those new to learning English are also supported well, often by bilingual staff, so that they also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development satisfactory. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities such as helping at lunchtime and as school councillors. They organise many fund-raising activities and as 'Little Rotters', their awareness of environmental issues and recycling projects is good. Lunchtime 'buddies' look after younger children and ensure pupils play sensibly and safely. They understand well the harmful effects of smoking and other dangerous substances. They understand well the importance of working with others supportively and quickly befriend pupils new to the school. They speak with kindness and concern about caring for others. They are confident that if disagreements arise, these are sorted quickly. Pupils contribute well to the community, particularly through church and other community events. They have a good understanding of adopting healthy lifestyles. The majority select healthy lunches and attend the many fitness clubs the school offers. Visits and visitors give them a good understanding of the wider world. Although pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of British society is less well developed, pupils are well aware that differences should be valued and respected. They enjoy school but a significant minority are absent too often. Although their personal skills are good, their below average literacy and numeracy skills means they are only satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is generally good and consequently pupils learn effectively. The typically good lessons are well planned to include activities and approaches that involve pupils in practical tasks where they have to think and explore independently. Teachers involve pupils well in lively question-and-answer sessions and pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers are especially successful at motivating and engaging a few of the boys, who occasionally struggle to maintain interest and concentration. For example, in problem-solving tasks, teachers introduce a level of competition, and this particularly appeals to the boys. Support staff are used well to help individual pupils and small groups, although occasionally teachers keep the class together for too long. As a result, lower attaining pupils sometimes sit through presentations that are too demanding while more able pupils are not extended enough. Teachers use computers well to present information visually so that pupils learn more effectively. Teachers have detailed assessment information about the progress of individual pupils. Most use this well to plan teaching and learning but, occasionally, the match of work to pupils' needs is not accurate enough to help pupils achieve more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is structured and planned well and is extensively enriched through additional activities that include sport, music and languages. The school follows a creative approach where learning across different subjects is integrated into imaginative topics that appeal equally to boys and girls. While this works well for most pupils in that they see the relevance of what they learn from day to day, occasionally this approach does not always allow lower attaining pupils enough time to consolidate their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum planning provides effective intervention activities and support for pupils who need extra help or who

fall behind in their targets. Provision for information and communication technology is good and teachers use it well for both teaching and learning. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development well. Many visitors, clubs and visits, for example to Kew Gardens, make learning come alive for pupils, capturing their enjoyment of the natural world and the freedom to learn as they explore.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care arrangements are good. All adults who come into contact with pupils are vetted appropriately. Child protection and health and safety procedures all meet requirements. Pupils' individual needs are considered sensitively and staff take prompt action if pupils raise any concerns. Links with external agencies are good and they are consulted promptly when necessary. Very good procedures to integrate new pupils enable these pupils to settle quickly. Good support for pupils who find learning difficult allows them to participate successfully and bilingual staff guide pupils new to learning English effectively. Pupils in Year 6 feel well prepared for secondary school and voice no major concerns about moving on. While the school has tried hard to improve attendance, a small minority of parents fail to respond to these efforts.

Academic guidance, while at least satisfactory, is inconsistent. Achievement is tracked regularly and most pupils have challenging individual targets, although some do not fully understand what they have to do to reach them. Most teachers mark work regularly and offer detailed supportive comments and advice to help pupils improve their work. The practice is not equally effective in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors ensure that pupils learn in a friendly and safe environment. The school's expansion has been managed well and raising standards is now high priority. Monitoring takes place regularly so staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. The headteacher's rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress shows that most progress well. Standards at Key Stage 2 show steady improvement over the last three years. Many staff, including subject leaders, are new to their roles. Actions taken by subject leaders to improve provision, for example by checking that work planned matches pupils' needs, have yet to impact on raising achievement. Staff have the support and training they need to carry out their roles successfully. Partnerships with the local community, schools and colleges are good and support curriculum enrichment well. With a few failing to send their children to school everyday, partnerships with parents are satisfactory. Governors support the school well and regular visits provide them with a sound overview of the school's work. They are not as rigorous in questioning pupils' progress. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Governors have agreed an appropriate plan and pupils have a good understanding of the local community. Links with communities that represent a wider range of ethnic, religious and social backgrounds are less well developed.

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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?	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?	3
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	3
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	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	3

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?	3
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	3
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 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hope Hamilton CE Primary School, North Hamilton, LE5 1LU

You may remember that three inspectors recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making us welcome and for talking to us about all the interesting clubs you can join and all that you like about your school. Many of you who have specific jobs as school councillors and playground buddies carry out your duties very sensibly, particularly the older pupils looking after the younger ones at lunchtimes. You are kind to others and do much to raise money for many good causes. Very many of you understand well how to stay safe, fit and healthy because you eat healthy food and attend many sports clubs at the school.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- Your headteacher and all the other staff make sure you make good progress.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you work hard in your lessons.
- You do well in your work and many of you use your targets to help you improve.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The curriculum, that is all the things you learn about, is good and you have very good opportunities to join many clubs and learn interesting things through, for example, residential visits, working with visitors and getting involved in recycling projects. We think that 'Little Rotters' is a really good name for your eco-group!
- The staff take good care of you and help you in your work.

Every school has things that could be better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that in all your lessons you have the right work to help you achieve your best. We would like all of you to come to school everyday because this will help you to learn even more. In addition, we have asked your school to provide more opportunities for you to explore and understand the different cultures, faiths and traditions of people who live in this and other countries.

You can help, too, by trying your best in all your lessons. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly during our visit. We hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours faithfully

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector