

Hurst Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103807
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336164
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Bingham
Headteacher	Ann Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 17 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents and carers who were present at the start and finish of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 217 parents and carers and 97 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly those of boys, high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well the teaching takes account of the needs of these groups of pupils and how well teachers help all pupils to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the curriculum at motivating and inspiring all pupils and providing challenge for the high attainers
- the effectiveness of middle leaders and governors in checking attainment, progress and teaching and maintaining the high outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

This school is much larger in size than most other primary schools. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than is typically found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is below average but the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs is higher than typically found. The school achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2007 and in 2010. The school is currently being led and managed by the deputy headteacher due to the temporary absence of the headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school which has built upon the high standards seen at the last inspection. One parent summed up the views of many when saying, 'This is an excellent school. It prepares confident, polite and happy children ready for their next step in education.'

Strong and clear-sighted leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The governing body supports the school well and plays a key role in ensuring the health, safety and well-being of pupils, and links with parents. School self-evaluation is accurate and, most importantly, the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey of excellence. This, together with the successful action leaders have taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection, means the capacity to improve further is outstanding.

Pupils enjoy school greatly and develop well as articulate, courteous and considerate young people, well aware of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Pupils join the school in Reception with attainment that is broadly that expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment has risen considerably and has been very high in national tests for the last three years. This represents outstanding progress and achievement from pupils' starting points and nearly all pupils meet or exceed their challenging targets. This is because pupils are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high. Teaching is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' significant rates of progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons very well. Teachers use assessment criteria skilfully to encourage learning, to analyse and improve performance, and to set challenging targets for individual pupils.

Pupils display a notable generosity of spirit, support a range of national and global charities and are always concerned, through their Eco-School work, to take care of the environment. A very positive atmosphere permeates the school, relationships are exceptionally strong and this, together with excellent care, guidance and support, results in happy learners. All adults work together extremely well to ensure that all pupils, whatever their difficulties or disabilities, are able to take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. Pupils' joy of school is palpable although this is not reflected in their attendance rate, which is just above average. This is because, against the very strong advice of the school, many parents take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils are lively, questioning and were keen to engage inspectors in conversation about their school. Their application and attitudes towards their learning are exceptional. They work very well cooperatively, having highly developed skills of listening, taking turns and giving and receiving positive criticism.

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The curriculum ensures that learning is very meaningful and great fun. It usually matches pupils' needs extremely well; however, longer term curricular plans are occasionally not as detailed as they could be to support teachers' lesson planning. In addition links between subjects have yet to be fully exploited to provide even more opportunities for pupils to practise skills such as literacy and numeracy as well as those of research and enquiry. This sometimes holds back the development of pupils' independent learning skills as, for example, it restricts opportunities for them to use initiative and curiosity in pursuing lines of research and enquiry that cross subject boundaries.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum by:
 - making sure that curriculum plans provide sufficient guidance to teachers to support them in their lesson planning
 - strengthening the links between subjects, in particular to further enhance pupils' skills of independent learning through research and enquiry.
- A realistic time scale for meeting these objectives is by March 2011.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of consistently excellent progress. Pupils greatly enjoy school, grow in confidence and develop very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils achieve highly because most teachers expect much of their pupils and explain complicated ideas well. In an outstanding numeracy lesson in Year 4, pupils were learning at a blistering pace because of the teacher's exceptionally high expectations of what he wanted them to learn and the challenging and fun tasks he set for them. The school is very conscious of the needs of all pupils and so there is very little difference in the progress made by the various groups of pupils. For example, the work is made interesting for boys and girls and the school works very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to fully challenge those who enter the school with particularly high levels of attainment.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and a deep appreciation and enjoyment of the wonders of life around them. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good and often impeccable, although some can be boisterous at play time and at the end of the day. Pupils readily explain the value of adopting healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise, reflecting the Healthy Schools award that the school has gained. However, this is not always reflected in the contents of their lunch boxes. Pupils have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in the community. They eagerly take advantage of the many opportunities to participate in the community and are well informed about other peoples' needs. They relish responsibility and this is shown through the mature attitude of the school council and the pupils' eager participation in imaginative and thought-provoking assemblies. Pupils develop excellent social and interpersonal skills and relish working collaboratively. This,

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together with high standards in the key skills in English and mathematics, means that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The carefully-structured curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' learning because the interests of pupils are very well met. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well through very effective personal, social, and health education, and there is an excellent focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences. In particular, the arts and music are very well promoted. However, the school recognises that links between subjects are not fully developed. Therefore, pupils have fewer opportunities to become even more independent by applying their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. In addition, curricular guidance for staff is at times limited meaning that teachers have to work harder to ensure that they plan effectively for different abilities. Parents agree that children are looked after very well. Induction programmes are outstanding for those who arrive throughout the year and those starting in Reception. Child protection procedures are rigorous and the care for vulnerable pupils is

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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outstanding. Excellent links with specialists help pupils with their learning, social skills and emotional development. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially strong and helps them to make excellent progress.

The quality of teaching and engagement with pupils and their learning is outstanding. Teachers plan very well, despite occasional shortcomings in guidance in longer term plans, to meet the needs of all learners and adapt their lessons quickly in response to their assessment of pupils' understanding and progress. Typically, lessons are fast paced and fun. Teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and activities provide very effective challenge so that pupils learn at a swift pace. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of 'talking partners', drama, role play and activities using letters and sounds (phonics) helps pupils make rapid progress in their speaking and writing. The school has set up very thorough systems to check on pupils' progress and these are used very well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and to enable teachers to consistently set the next steps for each pupil's learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the quality of their work and what they need to do next in order to move forward.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear and unwavering vision for her school which is supported by the governing body. The governing body fulfils all legal requirements and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff with all safeguarding arrangements found to be effective at the time of the inspection. Arrangements for health and safety are good and risk assessments thorough. The governing body holds the school to account well for its work, and systems for evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives are increasingly robust. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the views of others and that a set of common, shared values is embedded in every child. Community cohesion is good and particularly strong at school, local community and international level. The school is developing effective ways of widening pupils' first hand experiences of the range of cultures present in Britain today.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children love coming to school and parents and carers are very appreciative of the good start that their children receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have created a safe, attractive environment in which the needs of all children are well met. Good provision for the Reception class enables children to achieve well and develop a good level of independence. Teaching is good and so children make good progress from their differing starting points. This is because a team of well-qualified adults support the children skilfully by asking focused questions to develop their understanding. There is a good balance of activities led by adults and those from which children can choose. Children are developing excellent social skills because they are making choices and fostering independence through working with others. By the end of their Reception Year, most children are working securely towards, and a minority beyond, the standards expected for their age.

All adults make observations of children and carefully assess their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership to her team. She has a very secure understanding of the Early Years' curriculum and constantly reviews her practice to ensure that all children receive high quality care and support.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents who returned the questionnaire. A number of individual comments reflected the good quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the high academic standards reached by pupils. The inspectors agree with these views. The numbers of parental criticisms were few and these were followed up as inspection trails during the visit. For instance, a small minority of parents and carers raised concerns regarding instances of inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour in class and around the school to be good. Inspectors agree, along with the school, that it can do more to communicate more effectively with parents about how the school deals with isolated instances of inappropriate behaviour. The views of the parents interviewed informally in the playground confirm the positive responses in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hurst Green Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 217 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 404 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	119	55	90	41	6	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	132	61	80	37	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	34	126	58	16	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	96	44	109	50	9	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	113	52	98	45	5	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	41	104	48	16	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	42	119	55	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	79	36	113	52	13	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	86	40	109	50	16	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	77	35	107	49	24	11	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	28	121	56	22	10	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	105	48	102	47	6	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	120	55	87	40	6	3	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hurst Green Primary School, B62 9NZ

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when

- we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed every minute of our time with you. A special thank you to those pupils who came and talked to us about their work and told us about all the wonderful things you are involved in. Here are some of the really good things we found out about it.

Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to provide you with the best education possible. They take great care of you and want to see you all achieve the best that you possibly can.

In Reception, you get off to a good start and you make outstanding progress as you pass through the school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards in all your subjects that are very high compared to those in most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you very well and you also work very hard. We particularly enjoyed looking at your stunning artwork and listening to you sing.

One of the very best things about your school is that learning is fun and your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.

Even though you go to an outstanding school, your headteacher, governors and staff still want the school to get better. To help them do this, we have asked your school to do the following:

- make sure that teachers always have helpful plans to work from when they begin to work out what individual pupils need to learn in lessons
- make clear the links between the subjects that you study and give you more opportunities to learn more things on your own.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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