

The Hawthorns Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109921
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	337395
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Fisher
Headteacher	Mr S Hempson-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2007
School address	Northway Woosehill Wokingham RG41 3PQ
Telephone number	01189 791676
Fax number	01189 798199
Email address	Head@hawthorns.wokingham.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Inspection number	337395

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The team spent approximately a third of the time looking at learning. They observed parts of 14 teachers' lessons and attended two assemblies. They met with three groups of pupils, two governors and teaching, support and administrative staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including data about pupils' progress and attainment, teachers' planning documents, school policies, procedures and records, the school development plan, self-evaluation documents, the minutes of the governing body and newsletters to parents and Carers. Questionnaires from 40 staff, 102 pupils and 139 parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- whether or not teaching is sufficiently challenging in all subjects
- how effectively the school addresses areas requiring development, including those from the previous inspection
- the extent to which aspects such as inclusion, community cohesion and sustainability help pupils to become well-rounded individuals
- how effective the school has been in developing the leadership and management skills of staff so that they contribute effectively to promoting high standards.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen slightly over the last three years but is still much lower than that found nationally. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with small proportions from other heritages. The largest of these groups is of Asian heritage. About 20 pupils speak English as an additional language but none is at the early stage of English language acquisition. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in two Reception classes. The school is an Investor in People and is a member of the Reading University Initial Teacher Training Partnership. It holds the Healthy Schools and Eco-Schools awards. The school generates some of its electricity requirements using solar panels.

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

Following an outstanding judgement at its last inspection, the school has not rested on its laurels. Under the astute direction of the headteacher, the committed and talented staff and governors have kept pace with educational and technological initiatives. They have provided an exciting and innovative curriculum, maintaining high levels of attainment across the school and providing pupils with very high standards of care and excellent outcomes for personal development. Consequently, the school exhibits an outstanding capacity to improve and an outstanding level of overall effectiveness. It fully deserves the very high standing that it enjoys within the local and wider academic communities. One parent expressed the views of the great majority when writing, 'The school is excellent academically but also takes very good care of my children.'

Children quickly settle in the Reception class and make excellent progress in all of their learning. Where thinking skills are stretched consistently, pupils of all ages rise to the challenge and perform extremely well. In lessons where this is targeted less effectively, pupils' progress, especially that of more able pupils, is fractionally slower. In mathematics, where practical investigations are not used frequently enough, progress also sometimes slows a little. Attainment throughout the school is well above that usually found, both locally and nationally. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their learning as a result of well-targeted support.

A buzz of enthusiastic inquisitiveness pervades the school. Children have great fun learning in an extremely pleasant, welcoming and cooperative atmosphere. An exhilarating range of lessons, visits, visitors and after-school clubs engage the pupils' attention, preparing them extremely well for taking a leading role in society. Led tirelessly by the headteacher, staff and governors work extremely effectively in tandem with parents and a wide range of local and international partners to further the pupils' education. Pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes, a high level of support from home and the good teaching they receive help them to make the most of these opportunities and to do well in their learning.

Pupils speak with great enthusiasm and obvious pride about their school work, although a considerable number said that they were unsure of what their targets were. They relish their responsibilities as school councillors and as members of the Eco-team, and are rightly proud of their support for a number of charities, including helping to pay for a classroom in Sri Lanka. They feel very safe and secure in school and know that they are valued members of the school community. The adults in the school provide them with an exemplary model of teamwork and mutual respect, successfully encouraging pupils to become 'responsible, caring, courteous and tolerant members of society'. The

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

Hawthorns fully lives up to its mission statement that its pupils will 'achieve success within a caring environment'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the current good pace of learning by:
 - challenging the thinking of more able pupils with greater consistency
 - basing mathematics teaching more closely on problem-solving and investigative work
 - involving pupils more effectively in setting their work targets and in assessing their progress towards achieving them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are happy, receptive learners who thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Very high attendance helps pupils to maximise their learning opportunities. Only a few failed to make it to school during the inspection despite extremely adverse weather conditions. Pupils are attentive and polite in lessons and are extremely sensible when moving around the school. They work very well in groups and are considerate to each other. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and how to remain safe in a wide range of situations. This is because they have taken good notice of the very good personal development programmes. Year 2 pupils showed considerable maturity and understanding of how to stay healthy and safe when devising warm-up games.

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books showed that they undertake a large amount of practical and problem-solving work in English and science in Key Stage 2, and do particularly well in these subjects. In mathematics, where problem solving is less frequent, attainment is higher than the national average but progress is in line with the national value. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were seen to be making progress in line with their peers, as were all other groups of pupils. In a very few lessons, some more able pupils did not make as much progress as they might because they were not fully stretched in their learning.

High levels of oracy enable pupils to articulate their views clearly in lessons and in other pupil groups. These views are valued by the school managers. Pupils have an exceptionally well developed understanding of complex issues such as sustainability and play a key role in promoting this central aspect of school life. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils discuss important issues reflectively in assemblies and in 'Philosophy for Children' lessons, exhibiting a maturity beyond their years. They develop a wide-ranging awareness of life and culture in other countries in French, geography, art and religious lessons, from visitors, from extensive charity work and from links with schools abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching seen was mainly good with examples of outstanding practice across the school. Positive aspects of teaching and learning included:

- effective marking showing pupils how to improve
- work based on a clear understanding of what pupils already knew or needed to learn next
- teachers summarising well what had been learnt so far
- discussion with partners to encourage pupils to articulate their thinking

Outstanding lessons challenged pupils' thinking extensively and encouraged them to take a positive role in assessing how well they were doing. Year 6 pupils reflected very maturely on the nature of truth then discussed whether or not they had successfully answered the question they had posed. In good lessons, the level of challenge was sometimes high but was less effective in promoting rapid learning because it was not used consistently to stretch the more able pupils. Occasionally, teachers supplied answers too quickly, denying pupils the opportunity to think things through, and did not involve pupils sufficiently in assessing how well they were doing.

The exciting and very creative curriculum is regularly adapted to ensure that it meets pupils' and society's evolving needs. It is hugely enriched by well-attended, wide-ranging clubs and activities. Links with a local secondary school have helped to extend pupils' computing skills while working with two professional photographers has

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

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

produced art and photographic work of the highest quality. Personal, social, cultural, health and citizenship education is enhanced by a most effective programme of visits, visitors and themed events such as that celebrating 'Black History'.

Carefully planned provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they enjoy full access to learning and social inclusion. Equal care given to transition, from nursery through to secondary school, minimises disruption to learning and progress. Parents and carers feel well informed through termly meetings with class teachers, newsletters, the website and, increasingly, through the use of text messages and access to the virtual learning platform. This is at an early stage of development but has already proved a popular mode of communication.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear vision and passion for excellence in all aspects of school life are shared wholeheartedly by the entire school community. This forms the driving force for the ongoing improvements and developments in standards, curriculum and buildings and for the strengths in community cohesion and sustainability, evident since the last inspection. Staff and governors know their school extremely well and high quality teamwork is evident at every level. The way that the school coped with extreme weather conditions during the inspection was testimony to the efficacy of its teamwork. Leadership and management at all levels are extremely effective in improving standards over time. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and work most effectively.

Judicious financial planning ensures that every penny is used wisely to enhance the site and buildings and to develop stimulating and memorable experiences that support the pupils' social, emotional, academic and physical development effectively. Evidence of this is found in the imminent completion of the new computer suite and the advanced plans for additional drama and music provision. Safeguarding responsibilities are taken extremely seriously by teachers, governors and administrative staff and are fulfilled systematically and rigorously. Policies are reviewed and monitored regularly, and staff report to governors on the outcomes. Governors undertake risk assessments regularly, for example they have improved vehicle movement through the site. They encourage parents and carers to play an active part in making the school environment safer. The school continues to find ways to include the views of parents, pupils and other partners and inform them regularly about developments. The parent who praised 'the excellent

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

sense of community and the fantastic teaching and learning ethos' hit the nail squarely on the head.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
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's development is generally above that expected for four-year-olds nationally. Home visits and close liaison with feeder nurseries enable teachers to plan programmes of work based on the achievements and development of each child. Consequently, children settle in quickly and make the most of a wide range of excellent activities. Only a few days into their school life, the youngest children played happily and were indistinguishable from the September entrants in their eagerness to learn. There is an appropriate balance between work directed by adults, such as the phonics work that leads to children rapidly learning to read and spell, and the activities that children choose for themselves. Independence is encouraged by the effective use of space indoors and out. Children were seen to explore and investigate with enthusiasm. Staff seize every opportunity to extend children's experiences. Snow brought in from the garden became an entrancing, miniature Arctic landscape, complete with polar bears and penguins that led to animated discussions on heat and cold, melting and freezing, and snow monsters. Well-annotated records inform staff about what the children need to do next and provide an illustrated, individualised record of each child's time in the Reception class. Children thrive and make excellent progress because of high quality care, extremely effective teaching by a seamless team of teachers and support staff, and first-class leadership and management of the Foundation Stage. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1, most children are working at levels well above those

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

expected of five-year-olds.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded were positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Every respondent believed that the school is led and managed effectively. Comments showed that parents were especially pleased with safeguarding arrangements, the way staff met the children's needs, initiatives to improve health, teaching and learning, and the support provided to assist them in helping their children to learn. This is in line with the inspection team's judgements.

The very small number of 'disagree' votes related mainly to the school not taking account of parents' views/concerns and not dealing with unacceptable behaviour. These were not representative of most parents' and carers views and not borne out by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at the Hawthorns 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 139 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 394 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	72	36	26	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	117	85	20	14	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	57	54	39	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	69	35	25	6	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	105	76	31	22	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	85	62	45	33	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	64	44	32	3	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)	84	61	48	35	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	57	48	35	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	46	58	42	6	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	43	57	41	9	7	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	107	78	29	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	76	30	22	2	1	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



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.

14 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of the Hawthorns Primary School, Wokingham, RG41 3PQ

Thank you all for making a wonderful effort to get to school through the snow and ice when we came to inspect your school recently. What an exciting time you have at the Hawthorns! No wonder that you like coming to school and rarely miss a day! The staff, and many of your parents and carers, work tirelessly to provide a variety of interesting lessons and clubs, and to organise brilliant and inspiring projects such as 'Take A Picture'. You are right to be proud of your fundraising for charity and your work in the Eco group. We could see how much your efforts are helping the school to reduce waste, run more efficiently and keep the buildings beautifully clean and tidy. Well done! I have not been in a school that produces its own electricity before. That is really looking after the planet! We were impressed to hear that everyone helps to grow vegetables, cook and eat them; you certainly know the best things to eat and the right exercise to take to stay fit and healthy.

We heard that you are very polite and found that to be true. You behave extremely well in and out of class and you show tremendous care for each other. The newest children in Reception have settled in very well and were enjoying working alongside the older boys and girls. You told us that you feel really safe in school and you explained how to keep safe outside, at home or when using the internet. That is very important, particularly as you will shortly be using the computers in the new suite. The adults look after you extremely well and they work with other people, like the school nurse, to get help for you if you need something that the school can't provide.

You do extremely well in tests because you listen carefully to your teachers and work hard in lessons. We would like you to do as much practical work in mathematics as you do in science. We saw some excellent English lessons where the teachers really made you think hard. We could see that you enjoy being challenged so we have asked the teachers to make sure that they do so in every lesson, so that your work gets even better. We have also suggested that you get more involved in setting your learning

targets. That should help you to remember what they are.

Your parents, the governors and the staff think that your headteacher is pretty special and runs the school exceptionally well. We agree. He told us that he couldn't do it without the excellent help that he gets from staff, governors, parents and from yourselves. That is what makes Hawthorns such an excellent school - everyone is part of the team and is valued equally. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Cathie Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.