

Honiton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113098
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338093
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Michelle Perryman
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Brown
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 15 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and informal discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at key documents, such as the improvement plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body, as well as 121 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the extent to which pupils' progress has improved, particularly in writing
- the impact of the school's actions to improve the quality of teaching
- how well the curriculum supports the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology
- how successfully improvement is being driven by leaders at all levels
- how successfully the school promotes community cohesion.

Information about the school

This school is of above average size and serves a mainly White British community in the older residential areas of this east Devon town. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. There has been a reduction in the local authority's admissions number for this school and the number on roll has fallen since the previous inspection. Several teachers have left and new appointments have been made, some temporary as the school adjusts to fewer pupils.

Pre-school provision on the school site is managed by a private provider and is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Part of the Honiton Children's Centre is located in the school's grounds. At its previous inspection, the school was judged to require significant improvement and was given a notice to improve.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Honiton Primary School has improved rapidly and it is now a satisfactory school. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and get off to a good start. The school has successfully improved the progress pupils make in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. It is now satisfactory overall and accelerating as a result of rigorous and frequent monitoring of progress and teaching that is now good. Attainment is broadly average.

Pupils behave well within a warm and caring environment where their personal development is generally promoted well. They enjoy school and work well in lessons. As one put it, 'I really enjoy school because our teachers plan exciting lessons.' Pupils' progress is accelerating in response to the infectious enthusiasm of their teachers, although there has not yet been enough time for the impact of the good teaching to be reflected fully in progress by the end of Year 6, particularly in writing. Teaching is good overall but some is satisfactory with a slower pace of learning and less effective use of assessment to plan suitable activities. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' skills in writing and in using information and communication technology, although there are fewer opportunities for developing numeracy skills and for gifted and talented pupils to join activities to develop their strengths. The curriculum includes some enjoyable and successful themes but currently lacks an overall framework within which the skills and knowledge across the various subjects can be developed.

Strong and effective leadership from the headteacher and her senior team, with good support from the governors and the local authority, has resulted in significant and rapid improvement. Leadership of English, mathematics and some other subjects is well established, but in other subjects and aspects leadership is being developed now as staffing stabilises. A firm, shared commitment to further improvement permeates the school, underpinned by accurate self-evaluation and clearly identified priorities for future action. The pace of improvement in the progress pupils make is accelerating rapidly and challenging targets have been set to maintain this. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress so that by the Year 6 national tests in 2011, 86% of pupils have made two levels of progress in English since the end of Year 2 and 87%

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have achieved this in mathematics.

- Improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best, by ensuring that:
 - work is consistently well matched to pupils' differing needs
 - staff enable pupils' learning to progress rapidly at all times.
- Review and reshape the curriculum to develop a structure which organises learning experiences to develop skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school, and maximises links between subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils get on well with each other and with the staff. They show good concentration in lessons and work effectively, both independently and in cooperation with others. Pupils are keen to do well and respond enthusiastically to the interesting challenges teachers often provide. For example, a Year 5 class particularly enjoyed their task from the 'Ministry of Defence' to create a quiz on healthy eating for soldiers while Year 6 pupils took pleasure in responding to the challenge of a missing piece of flooring in their teacher's bathroom.

A key strength of the school is the frequent, careful tracking of the progress pupils make. Expectations of progress are high and additional support or challenge is provided where needed. This has resulted in achievement that is now satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, progress is improving as new staff settle in with their classes. The school's data indicate that pupils are on track to record some improvement in writing, and at the higher Level 3 in reading, compared with the summer of 2009. Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The biggest improvement has been in science where pupils respond well to greater opportunities to undertake investigations. In English, improvement has been slower as staff have worked hard to address previous gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in writing. There has still not been enough time to address fully the legacy of past weaknesses in provision for current Year 6 pupils. As a result, their skills in writing lag behind their skills in reading. Progress has improved steadily in mathematics as a result of teachers' greater confidence in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers as a result of the additional support they receive.

Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and of plenty of exercise. They use information and communication technology well. Pupils' average attainment in literacy and numeracy equips them soundly for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' targets give them clear indications of what they need to do to improve in English and mathematics and their work is marked well. Teachers provide clear feedback on how well pupils have done and how to do better. There are frequent invitations to rewrite a sentence or two in the light of the teacher's advice, to which pupils respond well.

The good and occasionally outstanding teaching observed was characterised by pupils engaging strongly with themes designed to capture their attention. Teachers used their assessment of pupils' previous work effectively to plan activities to address identified difficulties. Lessons proceeded at a brisk pace and teachers' subject knowledge was good. Teaching assistants made a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, teachers sometimes gave too much time to activities or on occasion missed opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and consolidate their learning. Pupils were not always clear on what they needed to do to be successful in undertaking a piece of work.

Staff plan the curriculum to provide themes that engage pupils' interest and this contributes strongly to the enjoyment of learning that most display. The school has rightly identified the need to review the curriculum in order to build on these strengths by developing a structure which maximises links between subjects and organises experiences to develop skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school. Learning mentors work effectively to raise pupils' self-esteem where this is needed. More vulnerable pupils are well cared for and receive valuable additional support for the transition to secondary school.

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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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The governors and senior staff have effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and are ambitious for further improvement. Leadership for the key subjects of English and mathematics is strong and provided by members of the senior leadership team. Staff changes and the appointment of several staff new to teaching have meant that leadership for some other subjects and aspects in the school is at an early stage of development. The governors are strongly supportive of the school and its pupils. The action plan monitoring committee receives detailed reports on progress in addressing priorities and governors ask probing questions to check how well the school is doing. They have a clear understanding of its developing strengths and what is in need of further improvement. Governors visit the school to find out for themselves how well the school is doing but this is not currently planned systematically.

The school successfully ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others and its support for all pupils in need of a little extra help is good. This shows its effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school also ensures that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. There is a strong sense of community in the school with sound links with the local area. The school has recently established a link with a school in a multicultural setting in Bradford and is hoping to collaborate with a primary school in Jamaica. There are good partnerships with a range of external organisations to extend the opportunities for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Good examples of these are the multi-agency approaches used to support individual pupils when required and the various visitors and visits that help to enrich the curriculum. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements well. A careful record is maintained of the checks made on all adults who work within the school and this is updated when needed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, their skills are at broadly expected levels, although some have weaknesses in communication and language. They make good progress in all areas of their learning, with particular strengths in writing. The school's assessment data and inspection evidence indicate that many children are on track to exceed levels expected by the end of the Reception Year.

The children are happy, secure and confident and enjoy their time in the Foundation Unit where the staff work effectively together and the classes are well organised and cohesive. Children work well, both independently and in groups, and take on responsibilities that contribute appropriately to the smooth running of the classes. All welfare requirements are met and children are well cared for in the welcoming atmosphere. There is a good partnership with parents and carers. Children benefit from good teaching that involves a wide range of activities where there is a good balance of adult-led and child-selected activities. Resources are very good and the two outdoor areas make a strong contribution to children's learning, particularly in their physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Leadership and management are good. The new leader of the Foundation Unit has carefully evaluated the provision and drawn up a detailed action plan to improve it further. There are good arrangements for assessing children's progress and careful records are kept by the teachers and the other staff which include photographs of children's work where appropriate. The progress of groups of children is not currently tracked closely enough.

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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

Analysis of questionnaires returned by parents and carers showed that most respondents were happy with children's experience at this school. Almost all believe that their child enjoys school and most think that the school keeps children safe. Inspection evidence indicates that these positive views are justified.

The concerns of a small minority about leadership and management and the way the school takes account of parents' and carers' suggestions are not supported by the evidence found during the inspection. The leadership of the school has achieved a significant improvement in pupils' progress and in the quality of teaching and, with the support of the local authority, is currently engaged in efforts to improve relationships with parents and carers. A few questionnaires set out concerns about the number of staff who have left and the number of new appointments. In addition to some staff moving to new posts or leaving the profession, the school is also adjusting to fewer pupils and staffing is now stabilising. The concerns of a few parents and carers about behaviour are not supported by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Honiton 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 346 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	45	64	53	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	31	78	64	6	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	30	69	57	14	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	25	76	63	13	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	38	69	57	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	25	79	65	7	6	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	17	89	74	6	5	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)	27	22	72	60	14	12	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	22	76	63	13	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	17	67	55	20	17	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	17	66	55	21	17	7	6
The school is led and managed effectively	16	13	58	48	29	24	9	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	26	80	66	7	6	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.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Honiton Primary School, Honiton, EX14 1QF

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us. We enjoyed visiting your school very much.

Some of you might remember that when inspectors visited your school in January 2009 they found that the school was not providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. I am pleased to report that there have been some big improvements and that the education provided for you is now satisfactory. Here are some of the important things we found out about your school:

- You make satisfactory progress in your work, supported by good teaching and a satisfactory curriculum. Your progress is speeding up.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in Reception.
- Your behaviour is good.
- The school cares for you well and you feel safe.
- The governors, the headteacher and the other staff have been successful in making improvements and are determined to make the school even better.

We have requested that the school does several things to keep improving:

- We have asked the school to help you to improve your progress to good in English and mathematics by ensuring that all the teaching in the school is as good as the best. You can help by always doing your best in your work.
- You often enjoy the interesting themes that teachers provide to link your work and we have asked the school to build on this by designing a framework to help you develop your skills and knowledge as you move through the school. You can help by making the most of new opportunities provided for you.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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