

Highampton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113177
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338114
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Gilling
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Barnett
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with staff, pupils, governors and parents. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at the school's monitoring of pupils' standards and progress, the school improvement plan, various policies and reports and reviewed the 20 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the rates of progress made by pupils of all abilities in mathematics and especially of boys in writing
- how the curriculum meets pupils' learning needs in information communication and technology (ICT) and in the awareness of diverse cultures
- how the governors and the small team of staff take on new initiatives, implement strategies for improvement and ensure continued improvement.

Information about the school

Highampton Primary is an extremely small school. All pupils are from families of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but the percentage of such pupils in some year groups is much higher than is found nationally because the number of pupils is so small. Pupils are taught in a variety of groups: in two age-based classes for lessons such as science, as a whole school for subjects such as games, and in small ability-based groups for English and mathematics. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Many children attended the privately run pre-school group situated in the village hall next door. The school has successfully gained a Healthy School Award (reaccreditation) and the Activemark this year. The school has also received Devon's extended school status. There are two full-time teachers in the school, one of whom was absent during most of the inspection.

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

Highampton Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and staff work together as a strong team. They evaluate their work and accurately identify those areas that need improvement. Strategies to address these concerns are effective and have been successful in moving the school forward over the last year. Pupils' standards and progress in reading, for example, have risen extremely well because of the very effective focus on engaging pupils' interest in stories, on getting them to enjoy reading and to gain success from their efforts. Considerable improvement has also been made in pupils' behaviour. Staff, governors, parents and pupils all rightly agree that behaviour is now good and the school is a harmonious and happy place to be. This has enabled pupils to make better progress in all their work.

Although standards fluctuate from year to year, most pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Currently pupils' progress in their learning is satisfactory. It is extremely good in reading and satisfactory overall in writing, although the girls still tend to make better progress than the boys. Mathematics remains an area where little improvement can be seen at present. The system of teaching mathematics in small groups has been planned to address this concern, but it is too soon to see an impact from this. Most pupils' progress in mathematics is slower than it should be.

Alongside the big improvements in behaviour is the positive enrichment of the curriculum. Pupils say they think their activities are 'fun', 'great', and 'enjoyable', and this has greatly increased their motivation to learn and their enjoyment of school. Teachers make meaningful links between subjects. This makes activities more relevant and enjoyable for the pupils. Teaching observed was often good, but lessons were not always sufficiently challenging, especially in mathematics, and too often pupils did not complete sufficient work to be successful. This was because the pace of some sessions was too relaxed and progress no better than satisfactory. When asked, older pupils often said they did not know how well they were doing. The majority said that the teachers helped them to learn, but most were not clear about how to improve, except in obvious ways such as to remember capital letters and full stops and to check their work for silly mistakes. Strategies to support pupils' understanding of their next steps in learning, such as the use of pupil targets, are new and their use is not fully developed. Partnerships with other schools and links with outside agencies have given additional breadth to the curriculum and have extended pupils' opportunities for learning. This has a positive impact on many aspects of their personal development as well, especially their understanding of how to keep safe and what they need to do to keep healthy. Opportunities to learn about other religions and the diversity of other cultures are not created effectively, however, and these areas of understanding are not sufficiently

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promoted.

The headteacher leads the school effectively by sharing her optimism and her commitment to the school's improvement. She has tackled weaknesses vigorously with the support of staff, with the result that a good number of improvements have been made, particularly in pupils' attitudes to learning. By eliminating poor behaviour, the inadequate progress of many pupils in the recent past has been addressed. While improvements are evident, the criteria for measuring the success of the school's actions are not always sufficiently clear and this makes it more difficult for other staff and governors to be accurate when evaluating these improvements. Nevertheless, initiatives that will benefit the pupils' development are effectively planned and implemented, demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement. This is also the view of many parents. One wrote, 'The school has changed for the better since the new headteacher started.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rates of pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics by:
- sharing the good practice in the school so that the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are provided with more challenge
- helping pupils understand how to be successful in their work, how to evaluate their own progress and how to improve.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to learn about other religions and cultures and have opportunities to work with peoples of other ethnic backgrounds.
- Develop criteria for evaluating the school's work so that staff and governors can make accurate and informed judgements on the progress of improvements.

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

Pupils start in the Reception year with a range of knowledge and skills that is typical of most children of their age and make good progress, reaching the standards expected. Through the rest of the school, achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory and most pupils reach the expected levels by Year 6. A good range of knowledge and skills is taught each day. Progress in reading is good. The most able pupils were seen enjoying Roald Dahl's *Danny the Champion of the World*. They listened closely to each other, developing a good understanding of characterisation and enjoying the exploration of new vocabulary and elaborate description. The activities of the youngest group as they explored an information-based text about snails were varied; they discussed all the fascinating facts while consolidating their knowledge of letter sounds and key words.

Now standards in reading have risen, writing, particularly for boys, is the focus for improvement and consistent strategies have begun to have a positive impact on raising standards and confidence. This term all pupils are learning about Ancient Egypt following a visit by a teacher from Exeter museum. The information gained has had a huge impact on their desire to know more and the teachers are using a wide range of

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resources to stimulate interest further. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were delighted by all the fascinating facts on how mummies were prepared. They acted out some of the rituals and were keen to write about this. A similar stimulus was used with the older pupils, but the transition from role play to writing was not as successful, even though they, too, were interested and involved. It is the inconsistency in motivating pupils to write well, to include the new skills they are taught and still remember the basics of punctuation, that is making progress satisfactory rather than good. The quality of teaching mathematics is variable. Consequently, progress is uneven although the most able pupils make good progress. This group is able to work with other able pupils at the local secondary school, which broadens their experience and further extends their abilities and skills.

Relationships throughout the school are very good and this ensures pupils feel safe and secure. They are aware of the potential hazards around them and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils' social and moral development is good. They show care for one another and for those less well off than themselves. They enjoy raising money for many local, national and worldwide charities. They are developing an awareness of the need for recycling and sustainability and have many opportunities to contribute their local community. Their awareness of the cultural diversity in Britain is not sufficiently developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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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How effective is the provision?

All the school's work is effectively underpinned by the care and support given to each child. Appropriately trained staff work closely with various outside agencies to support pupils and their families when necessary. Strong partnerships are made with families when children start and this continues through the school. Good links with the pre-school group ensure children settle quickly into school routines. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is evidence of good teaching in some areas. The teaching of reading, for example, is good. Lessons are often well structured to introduce new ideas and to support pupils' progress. The pace of some lessons is too leisurely and pupils have to wait for others in their group to finish rather than go on at their own pace and attempt more challenging work. Pupils want to do well, but expectations for how much is completed are not sufficiently clear and strategies that help them understand how to be successful are not taught consistently. Teachers' expertise in assessing pupils' standards and progress is improving with the result that activities are usually appropriately matched to the pupils' needs. Staff adapt their planning so that meaningful links are made between subjects, which engages pupils' interest and motivation better. This has been particularly important in helping pupils, especially the boys, in writing, but it is equally important in other subjects too. Parents recognise the change in pupils' attitudes. 'I am very pleased with the way my children have become engaged and enthused with their own learning,' was how one parent expressed their feelings about the activities and style of teaching now evident in the school. Concerns over progress in ICT due to weaknesses in the equipment have been dealt with. Very good links with the local secondary school have proved invaluable and weekly lessons with pupils in Years 3 to 6 are extending their skills and expertise. These links help to ease transition at the end of Year 6. The quality of artwork in the school is a particular strength.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Highampton has been a successful school for many years but went through a phase when pupils' behaviour declined and this affected their progress. This was accurately identified by the headteacher who, with the support of all staff, has turned this around. Pupils told the inspector that it was 'a hundred times better now'. The atmosphere in the school is happy and purposeful, and pupils' standards and progress are on the rise once

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more. One parent rightly commented, 'The headteacher has brought a much needed fresh vibrancy to the school with a refreshing direct but affable manner.' The headteacher recognises there is still much to do, especially in promoting consistently high standards in teaching, particularly of mathematics.

The school makes good use of its limited financial resources, but the full impact on improvement has yet to be seen. Although Highampton is only a very small school, the headteacher has ensured that pupils of all abilities have access to the support and enrichment opportunities provided in larger schools. The expertise of staff is utilised well and most aspects of the curriculum are provided for at least satisfactorily. Staff and governors have satisfactorily evaluated the school's procedures to promote community cohesion. However, there is a lack of opportunity for cultural development which would enable pupils to learn more about the diversity of religions and cultures. Plans are in place to improve this.

Governors are well informed. They monitor the work of the school appropriately and challenge its effectiveness. They formally evaluate the outcomes of initiatives and the progress of developments, but the criteria by which they measure improvements are not sufficiently clear. Safeguarding requirements are met and at the time of the inspection were followed appropriately. Partnerships are good and most parents feel well informed and involved. Links with outside agencies are effectively utilised to support the curriculum and to enhance pupils' academic and personal development.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

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

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The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There are usually only a very small number of children in this age range, but the staff identify their emotional and learning needs well and provide for their effective support and development. The progress of each child is therefore good, particularly in their own areas of weakness. Activities have a positive balance of independently chosen tasks and those directed by an adult. Children have access to a good range of resources, including a secure outside area where children are safe to experiment and explore through a range of activities. Children benefit from working alongside the older children in the class, developing confidence in their own abilities and learning from the others. This was very well exemplified during the lesson on the preparation of mummies in Ancient Egypt. The youngest children listened intently, often taking an active part in the sharing of ideas, and joined older pupils in 'writing' about what they had learnt. Their work and progress are monitored carefully and next steps are planned effectively. Good use is made of teaching assistants and of parents' expertise in promoting children's good learning. The headteacher and class teacher lead the provision well and are focusing successfully on building closer links with the pre-school, sharing resources and ensuring a smooth progression from one setting to the next.

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

An exceedingly high proportion of parents returned the questionnaire. All were supportive of the school. Parents generally were pleased about all aspects of the school's work and felt that pupils were happy and safe at school. One parent had concerns about the behaviour at the school, but inspection evidence indicates that this was a concern connected to difficulties in the past. Most parents felt that behaviour was now good. Several parents commented on the positive and harmonious atmosphere in the school and how the headteacher has made many positive changes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highampton Community 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 29 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	70	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	50	8	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	55	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	70	6	30	0	0	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)	11	55	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	60	7	35	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	55	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	55	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	70	6	30	0	0	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.



1 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highampton Community Primary School, Highampton, Beaworthy, EX21 5LE

Thank you for making me so welcome and answering my questions when I visited you recently. You told me that you enjoy school, like your teachers, and really enjoy your activities. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a school that wants you to do well and the staff are working hard to make it better. Here are some of the things I found out about you.

- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception class.
- You make the progress expected of you and reach standards in Year 6 that are similar to many pupils nationally.
- You behave well. You are polite, friendly and helpful. You told me how everyone gets on well together and that you enjoy helping each other.
- You told me that you feel safe in school and you have a good understanding of the need to keep yourself safe.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and everyone works together as a strong team. There is a good partnership with your parents and others who can help you to learn.
- The staff look after you well so you are kept safe and feel happy at school.

Highampton has already made many improvements but we have asked the teachers and governors to do these things to make the school even better:

- to help you to understand how you can improve your work, give you more tasks that make you think hard, and help you make better progress in writing and in mathematics
- to give you opportunities to find out more about people of different religions and cultures who live in England and around the world
- to agree the best way of measuring how well the school is improving.

Thank you again for helping me with my questions, and remember: you can play your part in making Highampton Primary a really good school.

Yours faithfully

Mrs H Callaghan

Inspector

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