

Hale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115900
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338679
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gaby Lucas
Headteacher	Maria McCusker
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around 50% of the time looking at learning. They visited 11 lessons or parts of lessons and made short visits to a further five, observing five teachers and two visiting teachers. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the most recent school self-evaluation form, the school development plan, governors' minutes, the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, school policies, and reports from the local authority and the school improvement partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 55 parents.

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

- the achievement of more able pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and the support for those identified as gifted and talented
- the impact of the training provided for teaching assistants in the Early Years Foundation Stage upon the progress made by children
- the impact upon attainment and progress of the additional one-to-one provision in Key Stage 2 for those pupils who need a boost in their learning
- the impact of the revised leadership and management upon school improvement.

Information about the school

Hale Primary is much smaller than most schools. Pupils come from the local village, but around three quarters of them come from neighbouring villages, some of which are a considerable distance away. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with only around 2% from other ethnic groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average; these are mainly specific learning difficulties. The school has been through several years of disruption caused by turbulence in staffing and a major re-building programme.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hale Primary is a good school. Its undoubted strengths lie in the excellent care, guidance and support that are enabling pupils to grow into polite, mature and confident young people, well prepared for the future. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and say how much they enjoy school. They behave well. The school works very closely with parents to support their children's learning. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to both the school and local community, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

Children in the Reception class get a good start to their education because of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. Pupils achieve well. They make good progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. Progress is particularly strong in English, but in mathematics it slows in Years 5 and 6, especially for more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the much improved provision and management in this area and the support of highly capable teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good but some inconsistencies occur in Years 5 and 6 for several reasons. Teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation in pupils' books are not high enough, especially in mathematics, and marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how they can improve their work. In addition, information about how well pupils are progressing is not used as consistently in mathematics as it is in English to plan work that challenges the more able pupils.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The good leadership and management of the headteacher have ensured robust action to improve the quality of teaching. Recent appointments have strengthened the leadership team. The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly. Attainment and progress have improved after a period of lower attainment, especially in English, which was a school priority. The school is demonstrating an ambition to improve and drive up attainment further. Action has already started on most of the areas for development as the revised and energised leadership team develop their improved roles. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in mathematics to match that in English by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used more consistently to plan work that challenges pupils, especially the more able, to achieve their very best

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- making sure that marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- Improve teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation in pupils' books, especially in mathematics, by:
 - setting clear guidelines about what is acceptable and monitoring the implementation of these regularly and rigorously.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school with skills similar to those expected at this age. They make good progress in Reception and enter Year 1 with skills above those normally expected. Attainment and progress in Years 1 to 6 are improving as a result of improved teaching, with no significant gender differences. Pupils respond well to the excellent attention given to promoting positive attitudes to learning and developing the key skills needed to be active and eager learners. They are very attentive in lessons and have a respect for themselves and others. Nevertheless, when teaching does not motivate pupils sufficiently, some low-level off-task behaviour disrupts learning.

Pupils say there is no bullying and they trust the adults to deal with any that might occur. The system of completing application forms for jobs around the school, such as librarians, not only helps their literacy skills but contributes greatly to the preparation for pupils' future economic well-being. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay fit and healthy and many participate in the wide range of opportunities for sport in lessons and after-school clubs such as the running club. Pupils' good cultural development is not quite as strong as other aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a strong understanding of local cultures and those in the United Kingdom, but they do not have such a secure understanding of non-European cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn well in this school because of good teaching and the stimulating curriculum that ensure many highly motivating experiences for pupils. Good partnerships with others enable such opportunities as learning musical instruments or street dance. The provision for ensuring pupils' personal development is outstanding. Strong links with an inner-city multicultural school support community cohesion well.

Teachers prepare lessons that stimulate pupils to learn. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching. For example, a lesson on recycling made very good use of ICT to show a video about how aluminium cans are recycled. Questioning often challenges pupils well and extends their learning while assessing what they already know. For example, in a mathematics lesson skilled questioning confirmed what pupils had remembered from the previous lesson and challenged pupils' understanding of two-dimensional shapes. Improved assessment procedures are used effectively to plan work that challenges most pupils, but this is still inconsistent in mathematics.

Pastoral care is very strong. Child protection procedures are detailed and well known to all staff. The school works very closely with parents to support their children's learning through information evenings and home/school contact books. Pupils deemed gifted and talented are identified early and are given suitably challenging learning targets. The additional one-to-one support for pupils who need help in developing their writing skills is very effective.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The high expectations of senior staff and the commitment to continual improvement are communicated well to all staff. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning well. Many subjects and areas are managed well by the new, strengthened leadership team, which is why improvement is taking place. However, this is a developing area and currently leadership and management in mathematics remain satisfactory because monitoring is not well established. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school is very good at ensuring that those with additional needs or those who are vulnerable are fully included in all activities. Community cohesion is promoted well, with good strategies to ensure pupils improve their understanding of other cultures. The monitoring of the impact of these strategies by the headteacher is good but that of the governors is less well developed.

The governing body is supportive and has worked closely with the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and complete the building improvements. Governors are rigorous in ensuring safeguarding requirements are met. Parental views are sought and listened to. Nevertheless, through their own self-evaluation, governors have recognised that many do not have enough opportunity to visit the school regularly to observe its work and meet with staff and pupils. This is a key priority in their action plan.

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
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established routines and strong links with parents help children who are new to the

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school to feel really secure and cared for and ensure they get a good start to their education. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the needs of the children are met well and the provision for their welfare is exemplary. Recent training for teaching assistants is making a positive impact upon children's learning. For example, children engaged in a challenging outdoor activity to build a 'bridge over a river' were continually assessed by a teaching assistant and challenged through high quality questioning. The exciting outside area provides good facilities, although the small amount of cover limits its use in bad weather. Adults are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. This enables all children to grow in confidence and build securely on their previous experiences. The well-organised and attractive environment is used effectively to support a stimulating curriculum that provides a good degree of challenge to children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The expertise and skill of the adults and the good systems for checking on children's progress ensure that all individuals are gently challenged to achieve well and start Year 1 well prepared for learning.

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

Many of the parents who filled in the questionnaires also submitted written comments which confirmed parents' very positive views of the school. Typical comments were, 'You'd have to go a long way to find a better school', 'My child loves going to school', 'I am happy with the learning through play approach' (parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage) and 'Excellent leadership'.

A very small minority of parents felt that, although the contact book is a good idea, it could be used better. Inspectors are unable to comment on individual circumstances but note that many praised the communication between school and home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hale 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	80	9	16	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	49	27	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	47	27	49	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	62	20	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	62	20	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	73	13	24	1	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)	28	51	20	39	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	60	19	35	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	55	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	44	29	53	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	39	71	15	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	63	17	31	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.



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Hale Primary School, Hale SO41 9FS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking with you and I particularly enjoyed watching your Michael Jackson street dance.

Yours is an good school. We think that it looks after you and gives you a really exciting curriculum. Here are some of the things that we liked.

- You get a good start to your school life in the stimulating Reception class.
- Your achievement is good and your attainment is above average because of the good teaching you receive.
- Your school makes learning interesting and fun because of the wonderful range of activities provided for you. No wonder you enjoy school so much!
- The school looks after you very well, which is why you know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- You make a big contribution to the running of the school through the school council and other jobs that you do.
- The school is led and managed well by your headteacher and the people who help her.

To help make your school even better we have asked the staff and governors to:

- make sure that marking, especially in mathematics, always makes it clear to you what you need to do next to improve your work
- make sure that those of you who are good at learning are really challenged in mathematics to do your very best
- make sure that teachers, especially in Years 5 and 6, help you to improve the presentation of the work in your books, especially in mathematics.

You can help with all of these by talking with your teachers about how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

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