

Hesters Way Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 131250 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 341119 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Clifton |

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 | 167 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Geoff Buckeridge |
| Headteacher | Graeme Davidson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2006 |
| School address | Dill Avenue Cheltenham GL51 0ES |
| Telephone number | 01242 525616 |
| Fax number | 01242 525678 |
| Email address | head@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk |

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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They looked at school documentation, including development planning, recent monitoring reports, safeguarding procedures and pupils' books. Inspectors analysed 25 responses to the parents' questionnaire and took account of the views of parents talked to during the inspection.

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

- The extent to which teaching promotes good progress for all groups of pupils in each year group.
- How well the curriculum addresses areas of weaknesses in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and English and science in Key Stage 2.
- How well leaders have worked to improve
 - the quality of teaching and learning
 - the challenge for more-able pupils
 - the way pupils' progress is tracked to prevent underachievement.
- The use of targets in lessons to promote higher standards, including marking and pupils' own assessments of how well they are doing.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school which serves the local area of Hesters Way and Springbank. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of White British origin, with the next largest groups being White from other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, mainly with literacy and numeracy needs and with behavioural and social needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught separately in a Reception class which has its own outside learning area. The school provides extended provision through a breakfast club.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average. Learning and progress are strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage where provision is good. Through the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory. The school's tracking shows a patchy picture of progress particularly in Key Stage 2. However, the learning observed during the inspection was more consistent. The pupils are cared for well and the support provided for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable is excellent. Since the previous inspection the school has made satisfactory improvements to mathematics teaching and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Good improvements have been made to the leadership and management skills of subject leaders. Sound self-evaluation ensures the headteacher and other leaders have an accurate understanding about the school's strengths and weaknesses and what still needs to be done. Despite this, a few weaknesses remain which have not yet been tackled urgently enough. In particular, the proportion of good teaching across the school is not high enough to help pupils make quicker progress. Lesson observation is not always sufficiently well focused on the needs of different classes or regular enough. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and show respect and consideration for each other. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and lead healthy lives. At lunchtimes many take up the opportunity to have the healthy and nutritious school dinners which are prepared on site. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their social and moral development are the stronger areas. They work together in lessons and respond quickly to requests from the staff. They are encouraged to express their views and opinions through the school council and have some influence on decision making. Attendance is significantly improving from a very low base due to the school's concerted efforts. Nevertheless low attendance is still adversely affecting some pupils' progress. On too many occasions these pupils miss valuable learning opportunities.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Relationships in lessons are particularly good and pupils confidently answer questions and respond well to discussions. The use of assessment to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning is developing securely, as is the quality of marking. Teaching assistants very actively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring they achieve as well as others. However more-able pupils are not always given challenging enough work.

The headteacher and other leaders have responded well to the Year 6 results in 2007

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and 2008 which showed underachievement. Greatly improved systems have strengthened the way leaders track the progress of pupils in English and mathematics. This is enabling additional support to be targeted where it is needed. Provision in English and mathematics has been strengthened. However, more remains to be done to develop the provision in science, particularly to improve the older pupils' understanding of scientific investigation. All the current requirements to keep children safe are in place including robust child protection procedures. The school works well with a range of partners to improve pupils' well-being and progress. Parents are extremely positive in their views of the school and are very well included, even though a very small number do not fully engage with the school's drive to raise attendance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure learning and progress are more consistently good by:
 - sharpening monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to give a stronger focus on the needs of different classes
 - improving the match of work to pupils' needs across the school, but particularly for more-able pupils.
 - Increase attendance by promoting the benefits of attending school with parents more strongly so that their children's learning is not interrupted so frequently.
 - Improve the provision in science and particularly pupils' understanding of scientific investigation.

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

During the inspection, learning in about half of the lessons observed in Years 1 to 6 was good. Good teaching in Year 3 for example, enabled the pupils to progress well in applying their understanding about weight. In lessons, most pupils show good concentration and perseverance. However, a few pupils rely heavily on the support provided to help them to learn. Over the past year the school's tracking shows a broadly satisfactory picture of achievement in classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress in some years has been hampered by changes in staffing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils often because of the success of this work. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority are monitored very carefully and steps are taken to help ensure they do not fall behind their peers.

The 2009 results were better than in 2007 and 2008 and demonstrate the impact of changes the school has made. Attainment in mathematics was above average and pupils made good progress from Year 3 in this subject. In English and science attainment was average and fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5. Current attainment in Years 5 and 6 is broadly average. The most recent Year 2 assessments also show an upturn in attainment, particularly in writing and reading. Attainment in mathematics was weaker mainly because not as many pupils reached the higher levels.

Pupils' routinely respond well to the expectations of staff. The pupils' questionnaires

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showed that nearly all pupils think that school is a good place to be. They enjoy school and comment that they have a lot of friends but would like more things to do at lunchtimes. Assemblies are used effectively to discuss safe and unsafe situations and display is used well to raise pupils' awareness of internet safety. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and pupils' have taken part in the National Lottery funded 'Let's get cooking', which the pupils enjoy. Pupils' learn about different faiths and backgrounds, but have limited experience of mixing or working with others from different cultures. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their school community through the school council. The impact of their work is constrained because they have limited responsibility to run things for themselves. Pupils develop basic skills and good personal qualities that contribute well to their next stage of learning. Habits of low attendance are a significant barrier for some persistent absentees, but there is evident impact of the school's actions to date. These include ensuring that when pupils arrive at school they enter a bright stimulating, learning environment and the use of school staff and external support to work with parents involved. Attendance for the year 2008/09, though still low, was an improvement on the previous year, and figures have improved significantly this term. They are now nearly in the average range.

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 | 4 |
| 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?

In all lessons observed, teachers and pupils had positive relationships. The pupils liked being chosen to answer questions and to explain their understanding to the rest of the class. During the inspection, some lively and energetic inputs by the teachers held the attention of the pupils well. In contrast to this, learning in a few lessons is restricted because information provided does not develop ideas quickly enough or the information given is confusing. The pace of learning is also sometimes slowed because the pupils sit on the carpet for too long. Pupils have regular opportunities to comment on how well they are doing in lessons but opportunities for them to assess their own or each other's work in depth are more limited. Teachers and other staff strive to make up any lost ground when pupils return to school after a period of absence.

The curriculum has strengths in the 'forest school' and in practical activities such as cookery, and is enriched through themed weeks and after-school activities. Good provision to help improve life-skills makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' well-being. ICT is used suitably to support learning in a range of subjects in the well-equipped suite. However, opportunities are missed to extend learning through ICT in lessons. Leaders rightly recognise that the science curriculum requires development, particularly scientific investigation.

The high quality care that pupils receive is seen in the support provided to the significant number of vulnerable pupils in the school, including several with complex social needs. The pastoral support team's excellent work to support families is shown in the positive impact it has on the pupils and the way they integrate. The breakfast club provides a calm start to the day, promotes healthy eating and has encouraged a few pupils to attend much more regularly. Pupils know that their concerns will be listened to and confidently confide in adults. Pupils spoken to during the inspection and pupils' questionnaires gave a very positive view about the support and guidance provided. Leaders are acutely aware about the need to further improve attendance and are working closely with families to decrease persistent absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| | 3 |
| 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 headteacher has the strong support of the staff. A significant effort to improve standards and progress in English and mathematics is now improving attainment.

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Changes introduced in these areas are securely embedded across the school. The school's planning for improvement rightly focuses on attendance, the development of scientific investigation and the quality of teaching. The headteacher and other staff recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluation of lessons in improving teaching. There is good practice in the school so expertise can be shared to drive this forward. The school adopts good safeguarding practice across all areas of its work.

The governors are active in supporting the school and have a range of skills to help the school move forward. These are yet to be used to their fullest extent to provide a strong challenge to leaders about the progress pupils are making. Relationships with parents are good. The questionnaires returned showed a high level of satisfaction with what the school provides. They are kept very well informed about their children's well-being and progress and how they can support their children's achievement. Provision to secure equal opportunities for all pupils is satisfactory. The school evaluates the performance of different groups and has made some improvements. There is a satisfactory strategy in place to promote community cohesion based on the school's own local context. This includes plans to improve pupils' awareness of life in a multicultural Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| 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 | 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

Children achieve well in Reception. They come to school with skills that are generally below expectations for their age and by the time they enter Year 1 they are broadly average. Children enjoy learning in a bright and stimulating environment. They participate well in all activities, cooperating with each other and sharing. They choose

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creative activities and work independently on the computer. The children talk confidently about their learning and show a good understanding about keeping safe and being healthy. They eat fruit and vegetables for a break-time snack. The children say they have fun and know they can talk to any adults in the setting about any worries.

Adults have a good knowledge and understanding about the needs of individual children in the setting. Good levels of communication between the staff, parents and the pastoral support team ensure that children's welfare requirements are carefully addressed.

Planning is good and based on records of observations. However, observation during the inspection identified some missed opportunities for extension work to be available for the children in both the indoor and outside learning areas.

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

School surveys of parents and carers show that they have a very positive view of the school's work. Communication between parents and the school is regular and informative. The inspection survey outcomes provide limited information since a fairly small proportion of questionnaires were returned. A few parents chose to add comments, and these were all positive about the work of the school. Evaluations collected by the school show that many parents comment especially positively about the provision made for their children in Reception. They greatly value the work of the pastoral support team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hesters Way Primary 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 22 | 88 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 22 | 88 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 17 | 68 | 8 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 20 | 80 | 4 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 22 | 88 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 19 | 76 | 6 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 84 | 4 | 16 | 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) | 19 | 76 | 6 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 19 | 76 | 6 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 15 | 60 | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 16 | 64 | 9 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 17 | 68 | 8 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 21 | 84 | 4 | 16 | 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

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | 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.



25 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hesters Way Primary School, Cheltenham GL51 0ES

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. We were all impressed by your friendliness and how well you expressed your opinions. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. You go to a satisfactory school. The curriculum and teaching in your lessons are satisfactory, although better in the Reception class. The adults in the school care for you well. We were impressed by the very positive attitudes that nearly all of you have to learning. You behave well in lessons and around the school.

- You make satisfactory progress in your lessons so that you reach standards in line with other children your age.
- You are helpful to others and say that you are very happy in school.
- The school gives excellent support to those of you who need your confidence boosting or help with concentrating on your work.
- You are learning to lead healthy lives and are safe at school.
- Teachers help you to understand what you are learning about so that you can check your own progress.
- You help by taking on responsibility in the school but could do more to run the school council for yourselves.

We are asking your school to do these things to help you to learn better:

- Make sure that all of your lessons help you to learn as much as possible, for example by checking that the work you are given is at just the right level.
- Work even more closely with you and your parents and carers to help you attend school as much as possible and not miss valuable learning.
- Improve opportunities to learn about science and help you to improve your understanding of scientific investigation.

You can help by telling teachers if you need harder work and by trying to always attend school unless you are too ill.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead inspector

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