

Handford Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124643
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359734
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Marten (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Katarzyna Blake (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
School address	57 Gatacre Road Ipswich IP1 2LQ
Telephone number	01473 251603
Fax number	01473 288965
Email address	ad.handford.p@talk21.com

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Inspection number	359734

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

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

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed twelve teachers in twenty lessons or parts of lessons. The inspection team held meetings with pupils, representatives of the governing body, staff and the school educational welfare officers. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' books, a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. Inspectors received and analysed 128 parental questionnaires.

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

- Are the strategies to improve attendance working?
- How does pupil mobility impact on standards in English and mathematics?
- Do pupils display positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons and at play?

Information about the school

Handford Hall is a larger than average urban primary school. It admits mostly White British pupils from the local area. In addition, a very significant proportion arrive from Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world, with little or no understanding of English. Mobility is high, into and out of the school. Minority ethnic groups include those from Bangladesh, some having no written means of communication. There is a small group of Roma pupils.

An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities with a well above average proportion having a statement of special educational needs; speech and language difficulties predominate followed by moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. A very few pupils are dual registered with other schools, or attend part-time. The school has Healthy Schools status, Silver Eco-School and the International School awards. In September 2010, the deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher.

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

This is a good school, steadfastly focused on raising learning standards and individual pupil outcomes, however diverse the learning needs and ethnic heritages. There is a very strong drive to embed basic skills, empowering pupils with confidence in their learning abilities, so that they make good academic and personal progress. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding in the tolerance and respect they have for each other and for the adults who provide them with outstanding pastoral care and guidance. Parents express their satisfaction with their children's education by saying, 'I cannot praise the school enough, my daughter really enjoys it here and is making good progress,' and 'Keep up the good work!'

The acting headteacher is moving the school forward rapidly, well supported by her senior leaders, staff team and the governing body who monitor the school's performance rigorously. They all share the school's aim 'Ambition, Believing, Celebrating' and put this into practice successfully. Attendance is satisfactory with persistent absence reduced, although too many families take term-time holidays which limits their children's learning.

Pupil mobility is high as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils arrive from many different countries, often at short notice and with little or no knowledge of English. The school is skilled at meeting their needs, using trained teaching assistants with home language skills or partnering with pupils who speak the same language and already fluent in English. If pupils stay at school for more than a few months, the vast majority who start with no knowledge of English make outstanding progress in their speaking and understanding. Fluency in reading, writing and using language in other subjects takes longer.

Almost all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are at a very early stage of learning English and basic skills. Nonetheless, they make good progress especially in their speaking, social and physical development. They move into Year 1 mostly at below average levels in reading and writing but perform better in mathematics. Good progress continues for all pupil groups with Year 6 doing particularly well in the 2010 science sample, with standards at or above those nationally. Writing was slightly behind reading and mathematics. Current standards are broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their lower starting points. This is due to a well-adapted and flexible curriculum, good teaching and teamwork using well-trained assistants. Despite pupils' accelerating progress, learning objectives are not always precise enough for different abilities and some lesson activities have no time limits to 'raise the pace' for pupils. Assessment is good; pupils know their targets and what to do next. However, some pupils find it difficult to work independently and are not always confident to 'have a go' at new work.

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

Senior leaders closely monitor, evaluate and review the school's performance, setting targets agreed with staff. The school is committed to increasing the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Previous inspection issues are resolved, standards are broadly average, progress and pupil outcomes are good with some outstanding aspects and leadership and management is good at all levels. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - developing more precise learning objectives that closely match learning needs for all pupil groups
 - ensuring a sharper pace in lessons through timed, focused activities
 - building on the good curriculum to develop pupils' independent learning in using and applying the skills taught.
- Improve attendance by reducing term-time family holidays.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school with attainment that is exceptionally low. A very high proportion come from many countries in Europe and beyond, with little or no knowledge of English. They enter classes across all years. Additionally, a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils settle quickly and happily, building good friendships, showing excellent tolerance based on exceptional mutual respect for others' cultures and backgrounds. They readily help each other, enhancing personal development. This has a positive impact on both the school and local community although awareness of global issues is less developed. Pupils are good ambassadors within and beyond school. For example, Roma pupils help their families to complete and fill in forms; other minority ethnic pupils help to translate information. Pupils are eager learners, determined to do well; they work hard to improve their basic skills, making good progress from their starting points as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those learning English make outstanding progress in their speaking and understanding.

Average standards were evident in lesson observations; a good proportion of extended writing in books and class displays is above average. In a Year 3 and Year 4 class, pupils were challenged when learning how to tell the time. They concentrated well, asking thoughtful questions of each other and their teacher to consolidate their understanding. Most independently solved mathematical word problems; more able pupils devised their own, although independent learning across the school is inconsistent. At the lesson end, they evaluated their progress well: one boy said he had learnt to read the questions properly; others said they now understood 'quarter to' and 'quarter past'. Pupils feel very secure and say, 'There is not much bullying here, the adults quickly sort it out.' Behaviour is good. They enjoy sporting activities and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, enjoying fruit snacks and selecting salad options at lunchtime. Pupil responsibility is embedded well. Older pupils help younger ones to read, play leaders organise games at break times and the school council has set up a 'swop shop' and are involved in new staff interviews.

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

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	3
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	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	2
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	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. There is outstanding practice in teaching pupils learning to speak and understand English. Teamwork between teachers and their well-trained assistants provides good support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils identified by good assessment and tracking at risk of falling behind. Questioning is used well so that pupils offer responses with wider use of vocabulary. Subject knowledge is good and this enhances pupils' enjoyment. Lessons are planned well for different pupil groups, but lesson objectives are sometimes too general to meet all learning needs. In some lessons, activities drag on rather than having sharp time limits that challenge pupils to work faster. Pupils know their targets and understand how to reach the next level and improve their work; they report that marking is helpful.

The curriculum has a solid base in developing basic skills, using strategies that work particularly well to accelerate reading and mathematics. Some innovative initiatives extend pupils' thinking, involvement and confidence, such as 'Mantle of the Expert'. Information and communication technology is embedded extremely well across the curriculum, as is for example, the use of writing in mathematics. The International Primary Curriculum has further expanded pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the exuberant African drumming sessions, which have been recently introduced. Art and music are strong subjects as is extra-curricular provision, with a wide range of activities such as homework and the kitchen

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

garden club with produce grown by pupils used in school lunches or taken home. The curriculum is well-adapted to meet the needs of pupils newly arrived to the United Kingdom and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pastoral care and the support and guidance offered to pupils and their families is outstanding. Staff work closely with families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, helping to remove any barriers to learning so that pupils can succeed. There are extensive links with external agencies, carefully matched to individual needs. This includes working with other schools, dual registration, individual learning programmes, access to medical and emotional well-being support, as well as school-based nurture provision. Thorough monitoring of attendance is improving pupil outcomes. Procedures for managing behaviour are clearly understood by pupils. Health and safety matters are regularly checked. Transition arrangements are well-embedded at all stages. A parent commented, 'My child has a disability which is dealt with very well, staff are always helpful and considerate.'

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and her staff team, supported by a governing body that monitors school performance closely and asks searching questions, are 'on a mission to achieve our goals'. They are well on the way. Standards are rising and the progress of pupils who stay on at the school is accelerating. Staff at all levels are skilled at managing pupils' needs, even though some families move out of the area after only a few days or weeks.

Safeguarding is good and fully meets government requirements. There are strengths in the way governors evaluate and review provision and in the rapid identification of pupils who are more vulnerable. Partnerships with parents and carers are good, with opportunity to attend English language classes and to 'Stay and Play' with younger children. Other partnerships are also positive providing expertise through links across the school cluster and with welfare agencies. These offer a wide range of opportunities that extend pupils' learning, and provide support and training for staff.

Community cohesion is good with well-established local community links. Pupils regularly fundraise for local charities to support community members and use the local area to enrich learning. There are a number of links with schools across the United Kingdom. Through ongoing audit of provision, the school is aware of the need to further develop global links. Equality of opportunity is good, individuals are treated fairly and pupils make good progress, personally and academically. They know that any kind of discrimination will not be tolerated.

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

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	2
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

Children get a good start to early learning within a warm and supportive environment. Home visits are made before children start school whenever possible. Parents are encouraged to be involved. Children who understand English are often outnumbered by those who do not. Nevertheless, all have similar need, from exceptionally low starting points, to develop basic social, learning and communication skills. They do this well because teachers and their assistants are good at planning well-resourced learning and play opportunities with a good balance of child-led and adult-directed activities in all areas of learning. Children enjoy using their imagination to discover for themselves, in and outside. There is a strong focus on developing skills in sounds and letter work and in understanding numbers. This extends confidence in speaking and learning to listen. Fewer children choose to practise emergent writing, but overall they make good progress, although still working well below age related expectations as they move into Year 1. Ongoing assessment is good with progress captured in photographs and text in children's learning journeys. However, important steps are not always dated so it is more difficult to view progress over time. Children become more independent as their confidence grows and they develop firm friendships. Leadership and management are good with regular evaluation and review of performance. Staff are encouraged to enhance their skills through additional training. Policies, practice and progress are readily shared with parents so that they know how well their children are doing. A Nursery parent summed it up by saying, 'Our son loves it here and would stay all day if he could.'

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

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

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority agree that their children enjoy school, make enough progress and are kept safe. They further agree that teaching is good and as parents they are happy with the school. The very large majority think that they are helped to support their children's learning and that their suggestions are heard. They agree that their children lead healthy lifestyles, that the school meets their needs and that they are well prepared for the next stage of education. They agree that the school is well led and managed. Although the very large majority agree that behaviour is good, a very small minority expressed concerns. Inspection findings showed that behaviour in lessons, around the school and at break times is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Handford Hall 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 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 324 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	67	41	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	64	43	34	0	0	3	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	53	58	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	51	60	47	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	52	59	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	48	58	45	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	41	65	51	4	3	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)	50	39	65	51	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	32	75	59	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	41	59	46	10	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	39	66	52	6	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	41	66	52	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	55	53	41	0	0	2	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



29 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Handford Hall Primary School, Ipswich, IP1 2LQ

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for giving us such a lovely welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you because you told us so much about how you like school and learning. This helped us a lot. You go to a good school and we were pleased to see you working hard. You impressed us in the way that you care about each other and quickly make friends with new pupils so that they settle well, even when they do not speak English. We enjoyed your vibrant singing in celebration assembly - well done!

You told us that you like using computers, reading, writing, mathematics, sports, art, music and after-school clubs. You say that your teachers make lessons fun. You help pupils who are learning to speak and understand English. You are making good progress and reach standards that are similar to those in most schools. You do well because the adults are good at helping you to learn and understand new things. They care for you exceptionally well so that you feel safe, happy and want to do as well as you can.

Your acting headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. I have asked them to do the following.

Help you to reach higher levels in English and mathematics by providing learning objectives that better match your different needs and abilities

Set a sharper pace in lessons, timing activities, so that you make even better progress. You can help by challenging yourselves to work quickly and not waste time.

Provide more ways for you to work independently, so that you can use and apply the skills you have learnt. Perhaps you have some ideas for doing this?

Remind you and your families that taking term-time holidays will slow your progress.

We hope that you continue to enjoy life and learning at Handford Hall.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.