

Hemingford Grey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110679
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	363768
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Burrows
Headteacher	Kate Fox
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons taught by eight different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and with staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, teachers' lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's documentation, which included records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 59 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How rapidly and consistently do pupils make progress across the school, particularly in mathematics? How accurate is the school's evaluation of children's attainment when they enter Reception?
- How well do staff use assessment information to plan work which challenges all pupils to make good progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted or talented?
- How robust and effective are middle management structures? What is the effectiveness of the governing body in setting a direction for the school?

Information about the school

Hemingford Grey Primary is an average-sized school. Pupils are predominantly White British, with only a few pupils from minority ethnic groups. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Most pupils who enter the Reception class have attended the playgroup located within the school grounds. Both the playgroup and the before- and after-school provision on the school premises are independently managed and are subject to separate 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hemingford Grey Primary School provides a good education. Outcomes for pupils and aspects of provision such as care are outstanding. The commitment of the headteacher and the leadership team and a determination not to settle for second best, have underpinned significant improvement in recent years. Pupils' achievement and personal development are now outstanding. Pupils' progress has improved as a result of good teaching. From a relatively low baseline on entry to Year 3, Year 6 pupils in 2009-10 made outstanding progress in English and mathematics, as shown by national test results. The available data suggest that progress for other year groups was not so rapid or consistent, with some, such as Year 2, making only satisfactory progress, and with some weaker progress in mathematics. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' recorded work, indicates that, supported by rigorous monitoring and intervention, there is now more consistent and generally good progress for all year groups. Current Year 6 pupils, who entered Year 3 with much higher prior attainment than their predecessors, have made particularly good progress leading to high attainment. Academically gifted pupils are supported well. The school has a well-developed system of individual academic targets, while teachers' marking generally provides pupils with clear guidance as to the next steps in learning.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Parents are well-informed and have many opportunities to find out how better to support their children's learning. Pupils are cared for outstandingly well. They greatly enjoy school and the very large majority feel outstandingly safe in school. Attendance is high. Pupils are outstandingly well behaved and have very positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, however, over-long introductions to lessons inhibit pupils' opportunity for active learning. Most pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles, particularly diet, and actively participate in sport.

Children make good progress in developing their basic skills in Reception. However, the underlying style of teaching is rather formal and the spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is not fully embedded. The school has acted to strengthen the leadership and day-to-day practice, in line with current guidance.

High quality extra-curricular and enrichment provision contributes very well to pupils' generally outstanding personal development. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from the diverse opportunities within the good curriculum and from outstanding partnerships with other schools, agencies and providers. This gives pupils, such as the able mathematicians in Year 6, excellent opportunities to extend their particular skills or capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored and effectively supported, making, as a result, consistently good progress.

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The governing body has an excellent understanding of its role, constantly evaluates its own effectiveness and routinely holds school leaders to account. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are outstanding. School self-evaluation is mostly accurate. The school has good capacity for improvement because there is a strong shared commitment, school leaders have a very convincing record of past success and there is a clear determination to sustain improvement. That said, the Early Years Foundation Stage is not quite as successful as at the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Reception class by:
 - ensuring that day-to-day practice reflects fully the spirit and expectations of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and guidance
 - ensuring, through continued professional development, that the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strengthened and developed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children's skills on joining the school are at least broadly average. Good progress in the development of basic skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children enter Year 1 with above average skills in reading, writing and calculation. Subsequently, mostly good progress in Years 1 and 2 supports above average standards at the end of Year 2. More rapid progress in the final two years in school has enabled pupils to attain highly by the end of Year 6 in the last two years.

Pupils' learning reflects the school's constant drive to raise progress and attainment by encouraging pupils to be active, independent learners. Several good examples were observed in lessons. In a Year 4 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, pupils showed considerable confidence and independence on their computers, accessing a publishing program and saving their work. Year 3 pupils were very motivated by the use of a commercial control package which enabled them to design and build a drawbridge. Stimulating, good-quality resources and a motivating activity ensured that pupils' interest was engaged. This led, in turn, to effective learning. Year 6 pupils were highly engaged by a stimulating budget management task in mathematics. A strength of the lesson was that learning was placed in a relevant, meaningful context, while strongly supporting pupils' life skill development, including very successful negotiated group activity. Such lessons reflect the school's vision underpinning the recent recasting of the curriculum. Pupils showed tenacity in solving real-life problems, clearly exemplifying the 'Five R's' (including resilience) which support effective learning.

Teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make, mostly, good progress. This is because the next steps in learning are precisely identified and these pupils receive effective individual support.

Personal development outcomes, including behaviour, are often outstanding. Parents and carers acknowledge the tremendous improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes in recent years. Pupils have well-developed social skills and treat each other, and adults, with courtesy. The school council is highly influential in school life and beyond and gives pupils good access to the democratic process. The school supports a wide range of charities and community organisations, although pupils' engagement with the local community is not as

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strong as their contribution within school. Older pupils take responsibility for those who are younger as buddies and play leaders. Excellent social skills and strong basic skills ensure that pupils are outstandingly well prepared for later life. Their moral and cultural development is also good. Spiritual development has been identified by the school as slightly less well developed than the other areas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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 and learning are good in Years 1 to 6. Relationships are a strength at all levels. Teachers mostly manage time well, although pace was a weaker aspect in some lessons, with over-long introductions reducing opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Skilled support staff have a positive impact on learning. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups of pupils who have significant special educational needs. They in turn are well supported through training and monitoring. The school has worked hard to develop and embed assessment practice and this has contributed to greater consistency and pace in pupils' learning. Marking is often thorough, providing pupils with guidance as to their next steps in learning. Occasionally, staff could have higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work.

The school has recognised the need for further development of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. In Key Stages 1 and 2, a new curriculum based on cross-curricular themes has been very popular with pupils, who are regularly consulted as to its content.

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This revised curriculum offers a rich range of 'deep learning experiences' across disciplines. For example, recent work on 'India' included elements of learning from science, religion, history and art. Appropriate time is allocated to English and mathematics, driving increasingly rapid improvement in these subjects in keeping with the school's priorities. Information and communication technology is used frequently and flexibly to enhance learning. There are good opportunities for art, sport and physical development. Homework projects provide excellent opportunities for parents and children to learn together. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is carefully planned. External partnerships, particularly with other schools and colleges, both maintained and independent, contribute exceptionally well to extending pupils' learning. Enrichment activities and extra-curricular provision, including lunchtime clubs for Year 2 pupils managed by Year 6 pupils, are extensive and well-supported.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff are highly responsive to pupils' needs. Transition arrangements are meticulously planned, particularly in supporting pupils identified as potentially vulnerable. The school works closely and effectively with support agencies. There is excellent practice, evidenced in the case studies seen, in supporting the health, social and behavioural needs of pupils in challenging circumstances.

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 headteacher's exceptional drive, vision and proactive leadership has promoted a clear, shared sense of purpose across the leadership team and has made a major contribution to the progress and current success of the school. Senior leaders are jointly involved with parents, pupils, governors and other staff in defining a vision for the school, regularly shared and revisited in the light of monitoring and evaluation findings. Middle management responsibilities are effectively discharged through a network of staff teams. School development priorities are identified through rigorous data analysis and extensive consultations with parents, pupils, staff and governors. There are systematic and rigorous structures in place to monitor, review and improve learning for all pupils, constantly seeking to enhance provision. Actions taken by the senior leadership team, and systematic support for individuals through coaching and mentoring, have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning. However, inspectors did not find examples of outstanding teaching to enable validation of the school's self-evaluation, corroborated by a member of the local authority staff, although the overall quality of teaching is now consistently good. Equality of opportunity is closely monitored and is good. While the leadership of the Early Years is satisfactory at present, the leadership team as a whole embeds ambition and sustains improvement well.

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Governance is outstanding. Governors are extensively and actively engaged with the work of the school in partnership, and in monitoring and evaluating both provision and pupil outcomes. Governors use the full range of their expertise exceptionally well to support the school. They are closely involved in strategic planning and in helping to set a direction for its development. Statutory responsibilities are met. Governors closely monitor all aspects of health and safety and, at the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were outstandingly thorough. Community cohesion is effectively promoted in relation to diverse faiths and lifestyles through the imaginative curriculum. There are good opportunities to learn about other communities nationally, in part through the school's link with its partner school in West London.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills and knowledge on entry to Reception are at least in line with expectations for their age. They were higher in 2010 than in 2009, partly because of the positive work, in partnership between the school and the on-site playgroup, to ensure more effective teaching of early literacy skills. Good induction arrangements, linking to all pre-school settings and including home visits, establish an effective bond with parents and carers and ensure that children feel safe. Welfare matters are given priority, so that children receive sensitive caring support and build good relationships. They mostly behave well and relate positively to adults and other children. The environment is attractive and well-resourced.

Overall, effective teaching of basic skills enables children in Reception to make good progress and outcomes are above those expected on entry to Year 1. Focused adult-led activities, supported by a skilled teaching assistant, ensure that children extend and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In this respect, the provision is effective. However, the teaching style has typically been quite formal, with sometimes over-

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demanding whole-class taught sessions and too few opportunities for children to take independent responsibility for their learning. This occasionally leads to some disengagement by children and, subsequently, the need to refocus their attention. The school has recently identified aspects of practice which have not been fully aligned to the spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and has begun to implement changes with a view to improving the effectiveness and impact of current classroom practice.

Despite these weaker aspects, however, children's skills in reading and writing are well supported by a programme for teaching sounds and letters (phonics), and this is reflected in good progress in these areas. An appropriate balance of activities chosen by children and those led by adults ensures that, overall, learning is at least satisfactory. Children move freely between indoor and the much improved outdoor provision. However, opportunities for learning through play have not always been strategically planned to enable children to practise their skills and extend their knowledge sufficiently.

Assessment observations are satisfactory and provide an accurate picture of children's learning and attainment. These records enable staff to track children's progress accurately. The leadership of Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory. The school has already taken steps to improve provision, supported by outside expertise and visits to schools with a record of outstanding practice.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Although the rate of return was relatively low, almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the survey are happy with the school and the care it provides for their children. The vast majority feel that the school engages well with parents and carers and that their children enjoy school. One said, 'Staff are committed and creative, generating a positive sense of energy and community. Leadership is very strong at all levels.' Several parents and carers commented on the effectiveness and impact of the headteacher's leadership and feel that the school has made considerable progress in recent years. Inspection findings very largely support parents' and carers' positive views of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hemingford Grey 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 215 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	66	18	31	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	76	14	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	53	27	46	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	53	23	39	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	63	20	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	51	24	41	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	57	23	40	2	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)	33	56	21	36	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	44	28	47	5	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	68	16	27	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	41	30	51	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	61	20	34	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	68	15	25	3	5	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hemingford Grey Primary School, Huntingdon, PE28 9DU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Many thanks also go to those of you who completed the Ofsted questionnaire. We enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views about the school and spending time in your lessons. We found that yours is a good school, with many outstanding features. These are the things we liked best.

You have very good attitudes to learning and most of you are making good and sometimes outstanding progress.

Teaching is nearly always good.

You feel extremely safe in school and you behave exceptionally well.

You undertake various jobs and make an excellent contribution to the school, although links with the local community are not quite so strong.

Staff care for you and support you outstandingly well.

You fully appreciate the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.

Those of you who find learning difficult get good support.

The leadership of the school is tireless in its efforts to make things better.

To help you do better, we have asked the school to do the following things.

Strengthen the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure that Reception children have access to the expected curriculum and style of learning.

All of you can help by working hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

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