

Halcon Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123707
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	385870
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Ann Henderson HMI

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	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fayle
Headteacher	Vanessa Coles
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2011
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Henderson

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Her Majesty's Inspector observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons taught by seven teachers, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and three joint lesson observations with the deputy headteacher. In addition, she carried out short visits to classes to focus on behaviour and safety and the quality of pupils' learning in lessons. Discussions were held with parents and carers, pupils, staff, including senior and middle leaders, four members of the governing body, a local leader of education and the education improvement officer from the local authority. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation which included the school development plan, safeguarding documents, information on pupils' attainment and progress, external monitoring reports and minutes of governing body meetings. There was a much smaller than average proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. The inspector analysed 28 questionnaires from parents and carers and other questionnaires from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school with four mixed-aged classes, one Year 3 class and one Reception class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at school action plus is well above average; the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than the national average for primary schools. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school runs a daily breakfast club.

The school received a notice to improve at the previous inspection in May 2011. This was because significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' achievement, their ability to develop basic skills in preparation for their future lives and the use of progress information in planning for the individual learning needs of all pupils.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2011. The deputy headteacher was appointed in April 2012.

There is an independently run nursery on site which was not part of this 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (5) on the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.
- Halcon Primary is a satisfactory school which has improved markedly since the previous inspection. It is not a good school because teaching is not consistently challenging. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' progress is improving and although attainment remains low in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Key Stage 2, the gap is closing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 and Year 2, pupils make good progress and their attainment is broadly average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
- Over the last year, the headteacher has maintained a relentless focus on driving improvement. Performance management procedures have been used well to set appropriate targets for staff in order to secure further improvement. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The governing body has increased its effectiveness through regularly monitoring pupils' progress, and together with the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher, the school's capacity for further improvement has been strengthened.
- There are examples of good teaching within the school, but where teaching is weaker, assessment information is not always used effectively to make sure pupils build on their existing knowledge and understanding. While targets are set for mathematics and writing, pupils do not use them to monitor their own progress. Marking has improved recently, but remains inconsistent. Not all marking provides pupils with guidance on how to improve their work.

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- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly positive although a small minority of lessons are interrupted by low-level disruption. Attendance has improved and is now in line with national averages.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of July 2013, ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, so that the very large majority reach age-related levels by:
 - securing consistently good teaching in the large majority of lessons
 - making greater use of pupils' learning targets to enable them to monitor their own progress
 - ensuring marking consistently provides pupils with effective guidance on how to improve their learning
 - strengthening the use of assessment within lessons, so that teachers reshape tasks to support pupils' understanding and provide greater challenge.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children begin in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below, and in some cases, well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy and skills. Historic data show that attainment by the end of Year 2 has been stubbornly low for a number of years. The school's own data show that the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 and Year 2 is good overall. As a result, pupils in Year 2 are on track to attain levels in line with most pupils nationally.

Because of the legacy of some inadequacies in provision in Key Stage 2, some underachievement remains. Pupils' levels of attainment are below national averages overall in English and mathematics in Year 3 to Year 6. However, pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. Opportunities for collaboration and targeted group work support pupils to develop independence, although this is at an early stage of development for older pupils. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet the government's floor targets for 2012. There are no significant variations in the progress between different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress commensurate to that of their peers because of the targeted support they receive.

Most pupils say they enjoy reading and a systematic programme to teach phonics (the sounds that letters make) is in place. Pupils show an awareness of how to

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decode words and regular assessments are made on what pupils have achieved. However, older pupils have not benefited sufficiently well from this programme and this limits their ability to tackle unfamiliar words. Consequently, their attainment in reading remains low, whereas the attainment in reading for Year 2 pupils is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age.

Most parents and carers believe their children make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms that progress is improving and attainment is rising, although this is not consistent in all classes and across all year groups.

Quality of teaching

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe their children are taught well. All teaching is at least satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good, but it is variable across the school. The features of the more effective teaching are high expectations of what pupils can achieve, positive relationships, clear guidance on what is expected to be achieved by the end of the lesson and additional adults working effectively to provide appropriate support, particularly for pupils with additional needs. In a Year 1/2 class, pupils were enthused and excited by the lively and creative approach to the recall of number bonds. The dramatic delivery, interactive approach and effective use of mathematical vocabulary enabled pupils to successfully calculate their number bonds using subtraction methods.

Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection and teachers make better use of accurate information to plan lessons for different groups of pupils. However, ongoing assessment of learning during lessons is not used with sufficient precision to adjust tasks to support some lower achieving pupils or provide others with sufficient challenge. Although pupils have targets for writing and mathematics, they are not specific to individual learning needs and pupils do not relate readily to them. Consequently, their effectiveness is limited. The marking of pupils' work is of a better quality, providing some guidance on how to improve. However, this is inconsistent and less effective in mathematics. The poor presentation of some pupils' work is left unchallenged.

Much time has been spent to improve the environment for learning. In classrooms, organisation is more effective and there is a consistent approach to encourage pupils to use the guidance displayed for literacy and numeracy. Attractive areas to encourage reading are more evident. Good relationships between pupils and adults make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The additional needs of pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs or whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are quickly and efficiently identified and these pupils are supported appropriately. A range of interventions, including one-to-one tuition and emotional and behavioural support, meets pupils' needs and enables them to catch up on prior underachievement. As a result, these pupils make good

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progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils receive valuable support in their personal development. Throughout the school day, the welfare of pupils is given a high priority. The parent and family support advisor liaises well with staff, pupils and families to deal promptly with matters relating to pupils' well-being. These links and the interventions to support pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties have a demonstrable impact on improving pupils' behaviour, self-esteem and their progress. The school has been equally determined in its efforts to improve attendance and reduce the high proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. It has taken effective steps. As a result, pupils' attendance is now average.

Pupils usually behave well and treat each other with respect and courtesy. The majority of pupils, parents and carers believe there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. However, some expressed concerns, particularly with regard to bullying. The large majority of pupils say they feel safe in school. But the few who say they do not expressed concerns over the behaviour of one or two individual pupils. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of different types of bullying. The school deals effectively with incidents of bullying and records show that effective steps are taken to reduce the inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils whose behaviour presents challenges. The behaviour and safety of pupils are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Since her appointment 18 months ago, the headteacher has identified and implemented procedures necessary to bring about school improvement. Her strong and determined leadership, with the support of the governing body, a local leader of education, the local authority and the newly appointed deputy headteacher, has resulted in all previously inadequate provision being eradicated. There is a clear vision for the future. Newly appointed staff have been well supported and settled quickly into their roles. This means that, despite the many changes, the school has maintained sufficient impetus to overcome weaknesses and improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The senior leadership team has also been strengthened and the successes of the last year indicate that it is strong enough to accelerate momentum further and continue to drive improvement.

One of the new systems in place is the pupils' progress tracking procedure which is now used well by teaching staff, enabling them to carefully monitor the progress pupils make. Regular meetings between senior leaders and teachers identify strategies to increase pupils' progress and improve their performance. Teachers are now accountable for the progress of their pupils.

There is a rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation which is successfully leading to improvements in teaching. Professional development has been used well to

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increase the skills of teachers and support staff. Members of the governing body have a strong commitment to the school and have increased their effectiveness by more readily challenging school leaders and intensifying their monitoring activities. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It contributes to pupils' satisfactory achievement and to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The use of information and communication technology has improved. Links between subjects are planned adequately and pupils use the 'Fizzbooks' regularly to enhance their literacy skills. Musical skills are promoted regularly, which pupils thoroughly enjoy.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils are narrowing. Each pupil is known as an individual and pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their lives are cared for and supported well through a good level of pastoral care. The strong links with external agencies to provide support for all pupils, and especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, demonstrate the commitment of school leaders to promote equality and tackle discrimination.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halcon Community Primary School, Taunton TA1 2BU

Thank you for welcoming me to your school, and a special thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to me. It was extremely interesting to talk to you. You were very polite and helpful.

I am pleased to tell you that your school is improving and now provides you with a satisfactory education. You make better progress and the quality of your work is improving. You enjoy learning, which is reflected in your improved attendance. Teachers mark your work regularly, but I think that you could be provided with more information about how to improve your work. I have asked the school to always make sure that teachers help you to make good progress by ensuring work is always challenging, and that you are helped to understand how you can use your targets to check on your own progress.

You were keen to show me the work you are most proud of. You enjoy many of the things you learn about in school. Your headteacher, the staff and members of the governing body are doing many good things to make your school even better. I have asked the school to make sure that teachers always consider how well you are learning during lessons, to check if tasks need to be adjusted, to provide you with more support if you need it, or a greater challenge, to enable you to always make good or better progress.

I enjoyed visiting your school. Continue to work hard and, most of all, enjoy your learning.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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