



# Hale Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 115900  
**Local Authority** Hampshire  
**Inspection number** 290360  
**Inspection date** 1 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** George Rayner

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hatchett Green
<b>School category</b>	Community		Hale
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Fordingbridge SP6 2NE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01725510436
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	88	<b>Fax number</b>	01725513720
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Deadman
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Maria McCusker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 November 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This small school is located in a New Forest village. The majority of pupils are well favoured socially and economically. The school is involved in partnerships with other schools, focusing on provision for the most able and for vulnerable children in rural communities, and investigating the impact of curricular initiatives on standards. It has the Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People accreditation.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents agree and say that their children are happy here and make good progress. One parent voiced the opinions of many by saying, 'Hale School is a wonderful community which really puts the children first.' The effective commitment of all staff to the care and happiness of the pupils results in happy pupils who grow up well. Pupils live active and healthy lives. They say that they feel safe. They know who to turn to if they need help, and are confident that they will receive this. Pupils have a good understanding of the environmental issues facing their home area. They know that they are privileged to live in a special place and understand the importance of protecting it. Pupils learn about other cultures, but the school's location makes it difficult for them to have first-hand experience of these. The school has attempted to overcome this by developing a link with an inner city school. Nonetheless, pupils' understanding of other cultural influences is the weakest area of their personal development.

A good curriculum and good teaching and learning result in good achievement. By the time pupils move on to secondary school, standards are well above average. Progress is good in the Foundation Stage because the adults provide a variety of stimulating tasks. These are effectively designed to encourage children to develop skills in independence and in working together. The school knows that its small size presents challenges in providing a broad curriculum. It works well with other local schools to meet these.

Lessons in Years 1 and 2 have not developed pupils' abilities enough to become confident in expressing their ideas in writing. This has meant that standards in writing at the end of Year 2, while still above average, have been lower than in mathematics. Improvements are being made, but they are too recent to have yet had full impact. While building up pupils' basic skills very well, mathematics lessons in Years 3 to 6 have been less effective in giving pupils opportunities to use these to solve problems. This has prevented standards from reaching the very highest levels.

Leadership and management are good. Since her fairly recent appointment the headteacher has come to know the school very well and has a very clear vision for the future. Morale in the school is high and the headteacher is strongly supported by a united staff team. These qualities and the school's track record in securing good improvement since the last inspection show that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 to match those in other subjects.
- Improve pupils' understanding of ways of life and beliefs in other cultures.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Following good progress in the Foundation Stage, pupils enter Year 1 having achieved well compared with early learning goals for children of their age. In Years 1 and 2, progress is best in mathematics, where it is very good. It is weakest in writing, where it is satisfactory. Many pupils have yet to develop skill and confidence in presenting and developing their ideas in writing. By Year 6, most pupils are very good readers and reach well above average standards in their ability to write in lively ways for many different purposes. Pupils make good progress in most areas of mathematics and reach well above average standards in these. A relative weakness is in pupils independently using what they have learned to make calculations and solve problems. Girls are highly enthused by the science topics, especially environmental ones, and as a result achieve very well in this subject. In most respects all groups of pupils achieve equally well. For example, the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully identified and they are supported effectively, so that they achieve as well as their classmates.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say emphatically that they enjoy school and that it is, 'a great place to be.' They show this by their good attendance and enthusiasm for joining in with all that the school has to offer. The great majority behave very well and work hard. A few boys however, find it difficult to do this when not being closely supervised. Although space for running around is limited, pupils energetically use the play equipment and climbing apparatus. Many enthusiastically spend some of their lunchtime 'power walking' with the headteacher on the village green. Pupils say that the school is a family in which all adults and children care for each other. They say that, although there is a 'Friendship Stop' for anybody who is feeling sad or lonely, it does not often have to be used. All pupils take turns to be members of the school council. They take their responsibilities seriously and say that their ideas are listened to. They are proud that the 'buddy system' for older pupils to look after younger ones was their idea, and are pleased that the school bought some good play equipment when they asked for this. Pupils enthusiastically take part in village events. Recently they joined in an arts project with some elderly residents and investigated village entertainments in bygone days. Good progress in key skills and learning to work cooperatively together contribute to pupils' good preparation for their futures.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers' good lesson planning ensures that learning develops well and that all pupils are well provided for within the mixed-age classes. Teachers plan interesting and motivating activities and successfully generate good relationships through their own enthusiasm and sensitive handling of pupils. As a result, most pupils are keen to work hard. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, and are increasingly involving them in evaluating their own work. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have recognised that they could be more consistently effective in helping pupils to become confident readers and writers. They know that they need to provide more opportunities for the older pupils to practise using their skills to solve mathematical problems. They are working together to improve in these areas, for example by being more systematic in helping pupils to recognise key words. In science lessons, teachers succeed very well in enthusing girls in becoming involved in practical investigations.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Specialist teaching of French enhances the curriculum for all pupils, by giving an early start in an important skill and helping them to understand another culture. The school has recently improved the number and quality of its computers and teachers' planning to use these is also improving. This is beginning to have an impact on pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) standards. A wide and varied choice of clubs significantly enriches the curriculum. The school values highly the contribution parents make to this. Several parents run clubs in areas in which they have expertise, such as chess, football, orienteering, netball and painting. Although space is limited in the Foundation Stage, the staff make good use of the available accommodation to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to learn by playing and exploring. The library is well stocked, but its restricted size limits opportunities for pupils to browse and use it as a setting for their learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care guidance and support are good. All procedures for child protection are diligently carried out. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have had the necessary training. The strong community ethos means that the adults and pupils willingly share the responsibility for caring for each other. As a result pupils feel safe and happy. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been developed quite recently and are continuing to be improved. They already work well in helping teachers to identify pupils at risk of underachieving. To improve these systems further, the school is making more use of ICT and is beginning to involve pupils more in their own self assessment and target setting.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Rigorous and effective self evaluation has given the school an accurate picture of its quality and performance. The school is working effectively to increase the involvement of subject leaders in monitoring and developing their areas. It is efficiently encouraging staff to improve their skills and effectiveness by sharing their good practice. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school and scrutinise its work. However, they are aware that they need to improve the quality of their monitoring by, for example, visiting more regularly during the school day. The school has succeeded well in maintaining high standards since the last inspection. It has effectively improved some important areas of provision, such as that for ICT, and has well-focused plans to improve others where this is still needed.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and I am grateful for the help you gave by talking to me and letting me look at your work. I was able to see that yours is a good school.

You succeed well in your work. Your teachers give you lots of interesting things to do in lessons and usually make sure that the work is right for all of you. This is very important in classes where there are children of different ages and is one of the reasons why you achieve well. I think that, for its size, your school does really well in the number of clubs that it puts on for you. Some of you told me that you like these a lot. I enjoyed watching some of you power walking on the village green at lunchtime. The school is very grateful that some of your parents run clubs in things that they are good at. Another reason that you do well is your own behaviour and attitudes. Some of you told me that the school is a happy family, where everybody cares for each other and I could see that this is true. You told me that you enjoy school a lot and show this by coming regularly, behaving well and being willing to join in. These things help your teachers a great deal.

You achieve especially well in English and science and your work in these subjects is often much better than in most schools. It was good to see that girls like science so much and do so well in that subject. Those of you in Years 1 and 2 are not quite as good at writing as you are in the rest of your work. In Years 3 to 6 your writing improves well and your mathematics work is above average in many respects. However, the way you use what you know to solve problems is not quite as good as it could be. I have asked the teachers to give you more chances to improve your writing skills in Years 1 and 2 and to practise using your mathematics skills in Years 3 to 6. I have also asked your teachers to help you to learn more about people from other cultures, because this is the only other part of your knowledge that is not quite as good as the others.

The headteacher and staff work together well and have worked hard to make the school as good as it is. They know what to do next to make it even better. Well done to you all and very best wishes for the future.

George Rayner Lead Inspector