

Hindlip CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116822
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	290647
Inspection date	6 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Weston
Headteacher	Julie King
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Fernhill Heath Worcester WR3 8RJ
Telephone number	01905 453455
Fax number	01905 453455

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come from the village of Fernhill Heath. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number identified as having learning difficulties. Children's attainment when they start school varies from year to year but is broadly average overall.

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, with some outstanding features. As one parent rightly commented, 'Children are helped to fulfil their potential both academically and socially'. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. This is because teaching is good and a good curriculum helps to make learning fun. There is a calm working atmosphere in lessons, and teachers plan carefully in order to ensure that pupils' differing needs are met well, especially in English and mathematics.

Provision in the Reception Year is good and, by the start of Year 1, most children are working at or beyond the expected levels for their age. In the Reception class, adults plan interesting activities that support learning well.

Standards are above average overall by the end of Year 4. Standards in writing have not been quite as high as in reading in recent years. The school is working hard to deal with this by enabling pupils to make greater use of their literacy skills across the curriculum and by introducing a joined handwriting style in the Reception class. These initiatives have had a positive effect but, at present, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills in subjects such as science and geography.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good, with pastoral support being especially strong. This strong and effective care results in pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are eager and happy learners. By the time they leave school, pupils are independent, self-motivated and confident. They are at ease when talking to adults and are very happy. As one said, 'I wouldn't change anything in the school'. Pupils particularly enjoy the outstanding range of clubs, visits and visitors. These opportunities significantly enhance pupils' experiences, especially in the arts and in sport, and are a good example of the way that members of staff go the extra mile for the children. Vibrant displays around school show pupils' high quality artwork to good effect.

The school is successful because it is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors are passionate about the school and over the last few years their determined leadership has ensured that there have been many worthwhile developments. The good systems that are in place to evaluate school effectiveness mean that there is a good understanding of what still needs improving. There are detailed procedures for tracking pupils' progress in Years 1 to 4 which provide valuable information. However, termly and end-of-year records of children's progress in the Reception Year are overcautious in their evaluations. They do not give a clear enough picture of overall attainment by the end of the Reception year, making it difficult to track progress accurately or to set targets.

The school has outstanding links with parents. Parents are rightly very proud of the school and they make a strong contribution to their children's learning. One parent summed up their views: 'My child's needs have been met in full and I've always felt grateful that he goes to such a caring school'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to practise and improve their writing in science and geography.
- Improve the accuracy of termly and end-of-year assessments in the Reception Year so that progress can be tracked more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children make good progress in the Reception Year. By the end of the year most children have reached or exceeded the expected levels for their age. Pupils do especially well in personal, social and emotional development. They settle quickly and develop good independence.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 4, and standards are securely above average by the end of Year 4. In English, pupils do slightly better in reading than in writing. Pupils read frequently at school and at home, but they do not always get enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills in other subjects. Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills as they move through the school because this aspect of the curriculum is promoted especially well.

Good quality support means that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Pupils from Traveller communities do as well as others in most lessons, although their progress over time is sometimes affected by prolonged absences.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' very positive attitudes towards learning and their exemplary behaviour are key factors in their good achievement. From when they start school in the Reception class, pupils want to do well because they enjoy school life so much. They quickly become confident, sociable and articulate. They support each other well, with pupils of various ages and from different backgrounds playing together very happily at playtime. Rates of attendance are a little below average because a small number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school is working well with outside agencies to reduce these absences.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to take responsibility and they show a good concern for the welfare and well-being of others by raising funds for charities. They make a good contribution to the community by looking after the environment and being conscientious about encouraging recycling. School councillors take their responsibilities seriously and were recently involved in interviews for the new headteacher. These activities and their good basic skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy. They make sensible snack choices at playtime and are very appreciative of the many opportunities that they get to learn different sports. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe. For example, they have been participating enthusiastically in a campaign to slow down cars on the busy main road that passes the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Reception class, adults provide calm and patient support to all children and generally meet differing needs well, although there are occasional missed opportunities to stretch the more able. Children's personal and social skills are especially well supported.

Throughout the school, teachers plan interesting and purposeful work, helping to ensure that pupils are well motivated and keen to do their best. Lessons are well organised and teachers have good relationships with their classes. Pupils are encouraged to work at a good pace, and are given good opportunities to share their ideas through discussion and challenging questioning. Teachers have good expectations for pupils' achievement and usually provide good levels of challenge, although this is not always reflected in opportunities for written work in science and geography, particularly for the most able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides every child with many different experiences, helping to ensure that they enjoy school. In the Reception Year, it supports learning well. The outside area is used imaginatively to promote children's independence and, for example, children worked enthusiastically in the area set up to represent a 'builders' yard' during the inspection.

In Years 1 to 4, the curriculum is sharply focused on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their numeracy and reading skills across the curriculum but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing, especially in science and geography. Creativity is fostered very imaginatively, and pupils produce high quality work in art and music.

There is an outstanding range of clubs, visits and visitors, including a residential visit for older pupils. These support learning well and help pupils to learn new skills. Pupils are successfully encouraged to maintain their health and fitness through a very good number of sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

High quality pastoral care makes this a very happy school where pupils feel safe and secure. One pupil expressed the views shared by others by saying that 'the teachers are great and look after us well'. The school works very well with parents and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. Good links with support services ensure that pupils from Traveller communities are fully integrated into school life.

Academic support is good. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly. Any pupils facing difficulties are identified early and effective arrangements are put in place to enable them to make good progress. In the Reception Year, although day-to-day assessment is thorough, termly and end-of-year records of children's progress give an overcautious picture of standards, making it hard to set targets for improvement. Marking is beginning to be used well to support learning, although this is not yet consistently good across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in the school's success. Her drive and enthusiasm have helped the school to move forward quickly. Her commitment to ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential is shared by all members of staff and is reflected in all aspects

of school life. As one parent rightly observed, 'The headteacher has had a profound influence on all aspects of the school.'

There are good systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness. Consequently, there is a clear understanding of what is working well and what still needs improving. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is rigorous and sensitive feedback is given to support improvement. The school has a great deal of data about pupils' progress, but it is difficult for senior managers to check that all pupils are doing well enough in the Reception class or to set targets for these children because records give a misleading picture of standards at the beginning and end of the year.

Subject leaders play a good part in leading the school and managing provision. They are fully involved in monitoring standards and this means that they know what needs improving. Where weaknesses are identified, swift and effective action is taken, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about the school and they provide a good level of challenge to senior managers.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

6 June 2007

Dear Children,

Hindlip C of E First School, Fernhill Heath, Worcestershire WR3 8RJ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. We are pleased that you come to such a good school.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Good teaching helps you to learn well and to make good progress. At the moment you do slightly better in reading than in writing.
- You behave extremely well and thoroughly enjoy school and all the activities provided for you.
- You learn how to stay safe and healthy. You are very thoughtful in the way that you raise money to help people who are less fortunate than you.
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they give you good help with your work.
- Teachers make learning exciting by planning lots of interesting activities and letting you take part in lots of clubs and visits.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school well and are working hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Help you to learn even more quickly in writing by giving you more opportunities to write in subjects such as science and geography.
- Get more accurate information about how well you are doing during and at the end of the Reception Year so that teachers can check that you are all doing well enough.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Capper Lead Inspector