



Yardley Hastings Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 121876
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292249
Inspection date 12 September 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Castle Ashby Road
School category	Community		Yardley Hastings
Age range of pupils	4-11		Northampton NN7 1EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 696268
Number on roll (school)	66	Fax number	01604 696177
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Marina Pearce
		Headteacher	Jill Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2002		

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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Yardley Hastings and a few pupils come from other villages. Pupils represent a broad range of socio-economic circumstances and almost all are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. When children start in the Reception year their skills and knowledge are a little below the level expected for their age.

The school has recently started providing cooked lunches and the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is increasing, though is still below average. A major building project was scheduled to start in the week following the inspection as, at the time of the inspection, the school occupied three separate buildings.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My child says it is a fantastic place to learn, and we think she's correct.' This is typical of the comments made by parents. This is a good school that has some outstanding features.

Pupils enjoy school tremendously. They achieve well in relation to their starting points and capabilities, reaching high standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6. However, standards of writing are not as good as those in other subjects throughout the school. Pupils' strong progress, particularly in reading, mathematics and science, is a good example of the considerable advances that the school has made in the last few years. One of the particular areas of improvement since the last inspection has been in the provision for children of Reception age, which is now good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has created very strong teamwork so that all staff, governors and parents work together well to take the school forward. Even with this level of progress, the school is not satisfied. There is a constant drive to improve. A good example of this is the persistence with which the headteacher and governors have worked to secure the major building project soon to be started.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of opportunities available for them and say that 'teachers make their lessons fun.' Parents also appreciate the range of opportunities and recognise that there is an interesting and stimulating curriculum. Pupils really value the trips, and particularly the residential visits, organised in conjunction with other local small schools. The partnership with the small schools cluster is particularly fruitful in terms of joint learning for pupils and training for staff.

The interesting lessons and activities ensure that pupils learn well. Clear records are kept of the standards pupils reach each year and, separately, teachers record pupils' progress towards precise targets in the shorter term. However, there is no system which ties these two records together. As a result, managers do not have an overall picture of pupils' progress in the shorter term. This prevents them from identifying individual needs even more precisely than they do at present.

Excellent care and guidance are provided for pupils. The pupils know they are safe in school and have an exceptional awareness of how to keep safe in the wider world. The result of the high quality care is that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is often exemplary and the way that older pupils look out for younger ones is impressive. Pupils are also very well aware of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, the healthy cooked lunches being very popular, with empty plates at the end of the meal.

The school is at the heart of the village community. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community as well as to their school. In school, pupils take high levels of responsibility for helping and taking care of each other.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of writing so that pupils are achieving as well in this area as in other subjects.
- Ensure that records of pupils' progress clearly show how well pupils are doing in both the shorter and longer term so that managers can check on their progress more regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well through the school, reaching high standards by the time they leave. They start in the Reception year with levels of skills and knowledge a little below those expected at this age. By the end of this year, they reach standards a little higher than those normally found. In Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory and standards reached by the end of Year 2 are above the national average. The school has recognised that pupils' progress flattens off in Years 1 and 2 and has put in place a good set of procedures to improve this. Progress from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6 is outstanding. Pupils reach high standards and score highly in the national tests in Year 6. In 2005, for example, the results were exceptionally high compared with the national average. There is no significant difference between the rate of progress of pupils of differing abilities. The school is working hard to raise standards of pupils' writing, which are lower than their standards in other areas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. The major strengths are in their moral and social development. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show high levels of care and concern for others. Their excellent contribution to the local community is exemplified in their involvement in the village Spring Clean as well as opening their fête to local people and inviting them to their productions. Pupils' cultural development is good. For example, there are valuable links with a school in Bangladesh and an orphanage in Mali that broaden their knowledge and understanding. However, there are few opportunities that enable pupils to appreciate the multi-cultural nature of Britain and so this aspect of their understanding is relatively less well developed. Pupils gain a wide range of skills to prepare them for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and pupils are learning well. Effective teaching is evident in the lively atmosphere in classrooms, where a great deal of focused discussion and independent work takes place. Teachers know their pupils well and there are really good relationships between adults and pupils. This ensures that pupils want to work hard and that they are fully involved in what they are doing. The extensive use of discussion, although generally very effective, sometimes leads to lessons not being quite as brisk as they might be. Teachers' planning is clear and ensures that they build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Unusually, this is the case across the range of subjects, rather than just in English and mathematics. This good planning helps pupils to learn well in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The range of learning opportunities is enhanced significantly by such things as all pupils learning Spanish and older pupils learning French. Music, art and drama also have a high priority and parents and pupils talk fondly about the quality of recent musical productions. Pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting curriculum that they enjoy and about the wide range of out-of-school activities. A wide variety of visits and visitors adds to pupils' experiences. A particular strength is the work undertaken within the cluster of small schools. For example, this included a wide-ranging project on a local estate earlier this year. The pupils benefited enormously from the social interaction with other pupils as well as the well-organised learning opportunities. A good example of the way the curriculum is adapted to meet the pupils' needs is the current focus on writing. The school has analysed that pupils are not reading sufficiently widely to raise their levels of vocabulary and understanding of texts in order to enhance their writing. A great deal of work has therefore gone into the library, which has won an award, and pupils are now reading much more widely. The school is now working to harness this improvement in reading in pupils' writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a high level of commitment from all staff to the care, guidance and support for pupils. Every child is regarded as important and strenuous efforts are made to ensure that all are included. For example, special action is taken to ensure that all pupils participate in activities such as residential visits. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and reviewed regularly. Pupils are provided with challenging targets and know how to improve their work and there are good systems to identify pupils needing support. The headteacher keeps annual records of the standards pupils are reaching and teachers keep records in the short term. At present these two records

are not combined so that managers are not able to check sufficiently regularly on pupils' short-term progress. The extremely close relationships with parents support pupils' progress and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. An excellent example of the strong teamwork that is so evident in the school is the way that the school improvement plan is created. This is done at a meeting with staff, governors and parents, all making an input. Parents appreciate this involvement, though some say that they wish more would participate. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school, harnessing the strong teamwork for the benefit of the pupils.

A good range of monitoring is carried out of all aspects of school performance and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. However, some of the monitoring of teaching does not record areas for development sufficiently clearly. It is not easy, therefore, for managers to check on whether weaknesses have been effectively addressed and that the provision for pupils is being improved. Governance is outstanding, with governors having played a key role in the progress that the school has made in recent years. The school is good at evaluating its own performance and, bearing in mind the progress made in recent years, is well placed to continue to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

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	1
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	1
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	1
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 so much for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed talking with many of you and listening to how much you like school. I'm not surprised that you enjoy it so much as it is a good school with several outstanding features.

You told me how the teachers make your lessons interesting and fun and that there is a wide range of opportunities for you, such as learning Spanish, taking part in musical productions and going on trips and working with children from other schools. I was particularly impressed with your behaviour and with the way you all get along so well together. I also very much enjoyed seeing how good your lunches are and how much you obviously enjoy them – lots of empty plates. Your involvement with the local community is really good, for example, when you help with the village Spring Clean. The links you have with the school in Bangladesh and the orphanage in Mali are really valuable in helping you to appreciate how people live in other parts of the world. Your headteacher and other adults work really hard to improve the school and take exceptionally good care of you. They make sure that you make good progress with your school work so that you do really well by the end of Year 6.

There are just two things that I have suggested that your school needs to work at.

- The standards you reach in writing are not as high as in other subjects.
- Although your teachers set you clear targets and know when you have reached them, these records need to be put together with the records your headteacher keeps. This will help the school to know even more clearly how each of you is getting on.

Thank you once again for all your help during the inspection, and continue to work hard and enjoy your school.