

Hathern Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120175
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313543
Inspection date	13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Frances Gillam

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laurie Hubbard
Headteacher	Michael Hoare
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Pasture Lane Hathern Loughborough LE12 5LJ
Telephone number	01509 842569
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hathern is smaller than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of most schools. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is lower than average. Classes contain mixed ages. At the time of the inspection, children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 were taught together and the Foundation Stage leader had been in post for two weeks.

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, which has improved well since its last inspection. Within the last 12 months, the school's systems to check and measure its success have improved considerably. Staff and governors have a clear and secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and they identify the right action to bring about change for the better. Standards are now above average by Year 6 and pupils make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, and the care, guidance and support they receive are good. Parents commented on the school's friendly family atmosphere and they are right to feel their children are well cared for. Staff members routinely remind pupils of how to stay safe and to act sensibly. This is a main reason why pupils behave well, take good care of themselves and others, and say they feel safe and free from harm. Staff show they value pupils' efforts and this leads to positive relationships. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. They make sensible choices about their diet and many take regular exercise. This is because of the good emphasis the school places on healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They support local events and the school forum plays an important part in making their school a better place to be. Strengths of the good curriculum are the extensive range of activities outside normal lessons and the good use of visitors and trips to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development.

Predominantly good teaching ensures that most pupils achieve well. Usually lessons provide a good balance between pupils listening, finding things out for themselves and working with others or independently. This leads to a good level of engagement and pupils working hard. Well-focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables these pupils to grow in confidence and make good progress. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and they know how well they are doing. They are proud of their achievements and the good progress they make in English, mathematics and science. Efforts to improve pupils' writing are proving successful, particularly in the older classes, where pupils have some good opportunities to develop their writing skills. This is not always the case by Year 2, where pupils are not always given enough time to write and sometimes the overuse of worksheets limits writing to single sentences. Satisfactory teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a secure start. Activities are usually interesting but sometimes staff do not make the best use of questioning to engage children in the learning. Relationships are good and children are settled and eager to learn.

Good leadership and management, in particular the enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher, have drawn staff and governors together to work with a common purpose. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are now rigorous but not always easily understood by all staff. Staff members are now more aware of what pupils need to do to improve and make better progress, although the use of this information to plan the next steps in learning is not always consistent. This has led to satisfactory rather than good progress in the Foundation Stage and in writing by Year 2.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry in the Reception Year is broadly as expected for their age. Satisfactory teaching and learning ensure that children make

satisfactory progress and reach average standards on entry to Year 1. Recently introduced planning and more robust systems to measure how well children are doing are beginning to embed but are not yet fully effective. Currently, not all staff in the Foundation Stage use assessment information well enough to make sure that children practise areas where they need further consolidation and to question and challenge fully those more capable of doing better.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Make sure that staff make better use of assessment information to challenge and support children to do their best, especially in the Foundation Stage.
- Make sure that pupils have better opportunities to develop their writing skills, especially by Year 2.
- Make sure that all staff understand the school's system for tracking pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good and standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. The school sets challenging targets for the end of Year 6 national tests and has achieved them again in 2007 in English, mathematics and science. This is because the focus on raising pupils' achievement, most notably in English and for the more able, has been particularly successful. Pupils, especially in the older classes, say they write about interesting topics and enjoy the challenges set in lessons, which leads to a good rate of progress. This is not always the same for pupils in the younger classes because they do not have the same range of interesting topics to write about, especially in other subjects. The overuse of worksheets limits the opportunities for them to practise and extend their writing skills further. For these reasons, pupils' progress in writing by Year 2 is satisfactory and not good as it is in reading and mathematics.

From broadly average standards on entry to the Reception Year, children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Although children have a secure grounding in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, activities do not always sufficiently challenge the children to do their best.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have respect for others and a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils behave well and play safely. These features contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good attendance. Pupils are developing a good understanding of what it means to be part of a community. They enter into local events eagerly and school forum members take their responsibilities very seriously. Their efforts have helped to improve the school environment. Senior managers know that pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the diverse nature of Britain's society today but they are developing ways in which they can extend and raise pupils' awareness further. Pupils know the importance of keeping fit and staying healthy. They make good choices about their diet and take regular exercise. Pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

For the most part the staff plan well for the different ages and abilities within their classes. This enables pupils to build effectively on what has gone before and to make good progress in their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well-focused support from learning support assistants. This helps these pupils to build self-esteem and to try their best. Pupils settle quickly and work well on their own or with others. This is because they know what teachers expect of them and what they are going to learn and why. Pupils say lessons are fun and they enjoy the opportunities to use resources such as computers to find out things for themselves. These features ensure that interest levels remain high and that pupils work hard. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully and use this information to identify what pupils need to do next. This works well in most instances but is not so successful in Year 2 when, for example, listening too long to the teacher shortens the time for writing. This, along with the overuse of worksheets, means that pupils do not develop their writing skills as quickly as they should. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children are happy, settled and are quickly becoming used to classroom routines. Staff value children's efforts and relationships are good. Not all staff use assessment information well enough to ensure that children are doing the best they can; for example, to ask questions that challenge the more able and to check how well the less able are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences that for the most part build well on what pupils have done before, although this is not always the case in writing by Year 2. In the Foundation Stage, recent developments to the curriculum are bedding down. Activities capture children's interests, although, as yet, it is too early to measure their impact on securing the same good progress as in other classes. The good emphasis the school places on developing pupils' personal skills, health and well-being enables pupils to have a clear understanding of how to live healthy lives and care for others. Pupils make good use of the wide and exciting range of clubs and activities outside normal lessons. These contribute successfully to their enjoyment of school and physical fitness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding procedures are robust and pupils are well cared for. Pupils say there is always someone to turn to if they have any worries and that their school is a safe place to be. The staff encourage pupils to care for themselves and others. They also encourage healthy lifestyles and physical activity successfully and this contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils who struggle with their work receive well-focused support and this leads to their good progress. All pupils have targets for improvement and most pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work further. The school recognises that target setting is proving successful with the older pupils but has yet to be fully consistent in the younger classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good systems to check the school's effectiveness provide senior managers, staff and governors with a clear idea of how well it is doing. These systems help to identify the right areas for further improvement, which often brings about change for the better. Standards are now higher than at the previous inspection and pupils' progress is quicker. These features show that the school has a good capacity to improve. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously and because of the improved evaluation systems they are beginning to raise more probing questions about the school's effectiveness. Considerable work has gone into improving the arrangements for tracking pupils' progress. These are now rigorous and they give senior managers a clear overview of how well different groups are doing. Senior managers and teachers record this information in a variety of ways but some formats are not easy to understand. This contributes to some inconsistencies in the use of this information to help plan the next steps in learning.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

14 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hathern Church of England Primary School, Hathern, LE12 5LJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the exciting things you were doing.

Your school, the people in charge and your teachers do a good job and this is helping you to make good progress and attain above average standards by the time you leave school.

Here are some of the good things we found about your school:

- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who struggle with their learning have good support and this helps them to make good progress.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together.
- You enjoy school and find learning interesting.
- You are fit and healthy because you make good choices about what you eat and take regular exercise.
- You are well cared for and you know how to look out for yourselves and others.
- Your school forum works hard on your behalf and you are good at caring for your surroundings.

To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on three things:

- To make sure that children in the Foundation Stage make the same good progress as pupils in other year groups.
- To make sure that you do your very best in writing, especially by Year 2.
- To make sure that all your teachers and others who work with you have a good understanding of how well you are doing so they can help you do even better.

With best wishes for the future,

Fran Gillam Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector