

John Hampden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123076
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314482
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt 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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Andrew Payne
Headteacher	Mr Alan Haigh
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Park Street Thame OX9 3HU
Telephone number	01844 212291
Fax number	01844 217651

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school shares the site and headteacher with the adjacent nursery school. Their governing bodies federated in November 2006. Building work is in progress to provide a cohesive Foundation Stage unit that should become operational in September 2008. The school no longer caters for Year 7 pupils. Numbers have decreased over the last few years and the school is now similar in size to primary schools nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased since 2004 and is now in line with the national figure. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is greater than in schools nationally. The greatest number has moderate learning difficulties followed by a small proportion with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Other needs include specific language needs, physical disability and autism.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

John Hampden provides a good education that develops well-rounded, confident and articulate pupils who have an exceptional awareness of their place in the world and their responsibility in making it a better place to be. Pupils show an excellent understanding of other people's needs. They support the Fair Trade ethic and eco-issues enthusiastically. Parents, children and staff frequently compared the school to 'a well loved family'. A palpable sense of community communicates itself to the pupils encouraging them to give of their best. Parents appreciate the 'relaxed, friendly, approachable staff' who 'go the extra mile' in their efforts to ensure that pupils both enjoy their time at school and achieve in line with their skills and talents. 'It's everything a school should be,' wrote one mother, 'it sets high standards socially and educationally'.

The headteacher promotes excellent teamwork. Together, staff and governors have developed consistency in organisation and management ensuring that standards are high and that all aspects of the school's provision, including self-evaluation, have improved since the last inspection. Attainment has risen because of good teaching and effective monitoring of pupils' work. Staff, rightly, wish to move this good teaching forward by ensuring any that is currently satisfactory becomes good and more good becomes outstanding. The school has tackled a decrease in the number of pupils positively, reorganising teaching on a more team-based model and sharing management tasks more equitably across the entire staff. Consequently, all feel part of the drive to raise standards. Over the last two years, these changes have resulted in improvements in standards and in pupils' personal development and well-being. This is evidence of the school's good capacity to improve.

The completion of new accommodation for the Foundation Stage is awaited eagerly and exciting plans are well in hand to build on the existing cooperation between the nursery and reception classes for the benefit of the children. All pupils, including those who find learning difficult and those with exceptional gifts or talents make good progress in their education because of explicit guidance, orally and in teachers' marking. Rightly, the school is reviewing the use it makes of assessment data to ensure that, as it introduces new ways of working, pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Adults provide excellent role models in their dealings with each other. Children trust them and feel safe in school. Well-being is safeguarded securely. High quality support and guidance underpin the pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils contribute wholeheartedly to the school and community through membership of various councils and diligent mentoring of younger children. Attendance is good and behaviour exemplary. Parents have a key role in their children's education and many recorded thanks for all that the school has done to promote their children's well-being over the years. Parents of children with a range of special needs praised the sensitivity, understanding and constructive approach of all staff.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start. It is well led and managed and staff work together cooperatively for the benefit of the children. Caring staff know the children well and have their welfare at heart. Consequently, children move onto the next stage of their education without worry. Good use is made of existing resources and children enjoy all areas

of learning. However, the new accommodation will provide better facilities and allow greater interaction between the two Foundation Stage year groups. When playing outside, children choose activities themselves, either working individually or with the staff who help them develop their skills. Children play together in a friendly way, behave very well and enjoy their conversations with one another. They are happy and settled in this part of the school, make good progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared to move into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Drive the quality of teaching up so that all is good and a significant proportion is outstanding.
- Refine the use of assessment practices to meet the changing demands of the school's organisation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with wide and varied skills. Pupils make good progress throughout their time in school enabling them to reach high standards in the Year 6 national tests. Standards in speaking and listening are particularly high. Any underachievement is tackled systematically. Pupils who find learning difficult or those with special educational needs are given good support and make progress in line with their capabilities. Some make even better progress and attain very well in the national tests. Good teaching extends pupils who are gifted and talented. Teachers' assessments are accurate and National Curriculum results are increasingly above the national average. Pupils reach challenging targets and rise to the expectations of their teachers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

High quality support and guidance underpin the pupils' excellent personal development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils, following the admirable lead provided by the adults in the school, and enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and peers. They are articulate and confident ambassadors for their school, for example when representing it at Hampton Court Garden Show or when presenting their work to delegates at the Fair Trade conference in London. Good provision for literacy and numeracy has had a positive influence on standards in other subjects, such as history. Children thoroughly enjoy school and make the most of the myriad opportunities to join clubs and committees, to develop leadership skills and to have their say in how things are run. This, together with the good standards achieved, prepares them very well for their future. Participation in the different councils is of the highest standard, demonstrating outstandingly mature social awareness and a fine understanding of ecological issues. Pupils' approach to learning and their behaviour are exemplary; they show great respect to all within the school community. The attitudes of the oldest pupils were most impressive as they prepared for their end of term production. Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any untoward behaviour. They are public-spirited and take part in local, county and national art, sport and other projects with tremendous enthusiasm.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to outstanding with the majority good. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average because staff set high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically to their challenges. Staff enjoy good relationships with pupils; behaviour is very good. Classes are calm, and staff can concentrate on their teaching. Pupils work well, independently and in groups. Better assessment and monitoring of work in the last couple of years has had a positive effect on tailoring teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils take responsibility for their own work and know what they have to do to improve. Staff have the confidence to select resources and adjust their teaching practices to raise pupils' achievements further. Teaching assistants are valued members of staff and play a significant role in raising standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, affording ample opportunity for pupils to enjoy their education. It provides well for all learners including pupils with special needs. Gifted and talented pupils have suitable opportunities to progress. The linking of subjects is developing well, making learning more relevant. Initiatives in team teaching are developing rapidly, increasing the pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Involvement in the Fair Trade project and participation in local events give pupils a good sense of their place in the world. The school offers a wide range of themed weeks and extra-curricular activities such as excursions to camp, sporting events and gardening club. These promote pupils' well being, successfully develop their understanding of the need to follow a healthy life-style, confirm their place in the community and provide a good preparation for adult life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The range of activities, the level of encouragement and support provided by staff and their undoubted commitment to the children's enjoyment and achievement result in a high level of care, guidance and support that satisfies parents enormously. 'There's something here for everyone' a Year 4 pupil told inspectors and indeed that is the case. Staff work conscientiously with each other, with partner schools and with parents to dismantle barriers to learning. A recent success of this is seen in the progress made by those pupils who have been involved in the new reading project. Parents commented on how much more confident their children are and appreciated this additional support. Learners' needs are identified accurately and appropriate intervention programmes, taught well by enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching assistants, help pupils to make up lost ground quickly and effectively. Pupils know what to do to improve their performance because they act on their teachers' helpful advice. The school is aware that it is now appropriate to develop its use of assessment data to ensure that standards continue to rise. While arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure, some administrative tasks needed to be updated.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors concur with the parent who noted, 'I feel that the children are led with passion and enthusiasm.' The well-respected headteacher's caring and enthusiastic approach promotes excellent teamwork and high morale. He empowers staff to make valuable contributions to the running of the school.

The development of teams to organise the curriculum has enabled staff to participate more fully in the management of the school, helping them to acquire a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Consequently, leadership and management, transformed since the last inspection, are good. Following the success of the collaborative teaching in Key Stage 1, staff are considering the opportunities provided by team teaching to improve the quality of teaching further.

Astute, businesslike contributions from the governing body, under the exemplary guidance of the chair, have strengthened strategic planning. Governors' valuable and valued contributions have enabled the school to build on its strengths and eradicate weaknesses noted in the last report. Together, staff and governors have created a school where personal development and high standards are pursued with equal vigour.

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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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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	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

18 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Hampden Primary School, Thame, OX9 3HU

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. In particular, thank you to those of you who helped by sharing your views with me. We agree with you and your parents that John Hampden is a lovely school to attend. You yourselves make an excellent contribution to how good it is with all of your eco-work and your focus on helping others in the school and abroad. No wonder your headteacher and teachers are so proud of you! I wish that I could have stayed to watch more of your rehearsals for the end of year musical. It looked very professional and was obviously great fun. I hear that the rugby tournament went well despite the rain. Did Elvis the scarecrow win a prize at Hampton Court? I do hope so. Isn't it exciting that the new Foundation classes are nearly ready?

Here are the main things that we found out.

- All of you make good progress in your learning because you are taught well, by teachers and teaching assistants, and you know exactly what you have to do to improve; as a result, you reach high standards in your work.
- You behave extremely well, are very polite and you get on very well together.
- You feel safe and enjoy learning because you receive excellent care and support and have an appealing range of activities.
- You put 100% effort into everything that you do, including learning.
- Your headteacher knows you well and he really enjoys being your leader.
- All of the adults, including the governors, help him to make the school run smoothly. Together, they have really improved it in the last few years.
- The school works very closely with your parents to help you achieve your best.

Even a good school can improve and your headteacher, staff and governors are thinking about how they can make the good teaching even better. We think that this is a good idea. We also think that with more mixed age classes in the school this is a good time to check on how your teachers find out how well you are doing.

Keep up your good work supporting our planet. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Cathie Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector