

Hetton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108803
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	309804
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Glover
Headteacher	Miss Ann Marie Burns
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Moorsley Road Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH5 9ND
Telephone number	0191 553 6750
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and almost all pupils are from White British heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school is set in an area of fairly high social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More pupils join or leave the school during the year than in most other schools. The pupils in Years 1 to 5 are taught in 3 mixed-age classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This small school has a very warm, happy family atmosphere. It is a good school where pupils achieve well to reach average standards from low starting points when they join the school. Most pupils in Year 6 met their targets in the 2008 national tests. Results in science were the best the school has ever had. Every pupil reached the expected level and almost half reached the higher level. In mathematics a few pupils did not reach their target, and because of the small numbers in the group this means that overall results in this subject were below average. Results in English showed good progress and targets were met. Pupils in Year 2 reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of year assessments and this represents good progress from their starting points.

Pupils love coming to school and relish the challenges and responsibilities they are given. One boy summed up the views of other children when he said, 'My school is good and joyful.' Pupils' strong personal development is largely the result of an outstanding curriculum which places emphasis on developing their independence and self-esteem. It equips pupils well for the future by giving them a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. The school council has made a great contribution to improving the grounds, play facilities and school rules, because as one boy said they have a 'licence to change'. Pupils' excellent citizenship skills have helped them to be selected as the top performing school in the city to win the 'Shining through Citizenship' Award. Pupils in Year 6 are excellent role models for younger children. When they leave the school they are well prepared for the future.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and say that learning is fun. This is because teaching is good and teachers plan carefully to make work interesting and pitch it at the right level. Sometimes, particularly in Key Stage 2, pupils do not produce as much work in mathematics lessons as they do in English and this slows their progress to satisfactory rather than good. The school has begun work on monitoring this to ensure that progress in mathematics returns to good. Teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' creativity, thinking and problem solving skills. Pupils are delighted with the topics they have worked on this year such as 'How to attract more birds to the garden', making a pop-up book for younger children or designing and making a frieze about the Sunderland legend of the Lambton Worm. The outstanding provision for art within the curriculum results in pupils producing very high quality work in this area. Parents are delighted with the good quality care, guidance and support given to their children. They are confident that staff know their children well and 'have nothing but praise for the way staff support anyone who needs it'.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has provided very effective leadership to keep the school moving forward at a good rate since the last inspection. All staff work hard to help the school improve and they succeed. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in raising standards in science and writing, and in developing the curriculum. Governors give good support and are proud of the school's well deserved good reputation in the community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children start school in the Reception class with skills that are below what is typical for their age. Their language and communication skills

are particularly low. Although the children make satisfactory progress overall during their year in Reception they do not reach the level expected by the time they start in Year 1. The children make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development. Children feel safe and secure and are ready to learn because of the warm, caring relationships they have with staff. Well established routines help them to become independent and confident, so that they make decisions for themselves and choose which activities they will do. Children's learning is slowest in language and communication. Although these skills are low on entry the children's knowledge of letter sounds are still very weak by the end of Reception, because they do not have enough opportunities to develop these aspects of their learning. Teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents speak highly of the good links they have with Reception staff and of how happy their children are at school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Raise standards in language and communication skills by the end of Reception and improve children's knowledge of letters and sounds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils reach average standards and their achievement is good. This is because they make good progress from below average starting points on joining Year 1. In 2007, Year 2 pupils reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in their end of year teacher assessments. In reading an above average number of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. This year pupils reached similar standards, though no pupil has reached the higher level. Standards in Year 6 are average overall, though there are some variations in standards between subjects. In English they are average, in science above average and in mathematics standards are below average. While results in mathematics have improved this year as a result of the school's response to some pupils not meeting their targets in 2007, they are still below average for pupils at the end of Year 6. Standards in Year 5 are higher and school data indicates that standards in mathematics are set to return to average next year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others because they are effectively supported by teachers' planning and well trained teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils love coming to school, they enjoy everything on offer and their attendance is good. They say they feel safe and secure and know that adults will look after them if they have concerns or problems. They show care and consideration for each other because of the excellent example that is set by all adults in the school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy and know the benefits of taking plenty of exercise. They behave well and form very good relationships with each other, so that classrooms are calm, happy places in which to learn. All pupils make a very good contribution to helping the school run smoothly and to the wider community. Year 6 pupils make an exceptional contribution to running the school and helping it to improve. They eagerly take on responsibilities, such as looking after younger children, acting as prefects or organising and leading assemblies. By the time they leave, pupils are mature, responsible young people well equipped for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good and outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of the different abilities and ages in each class. They make clear to pupils what they will learn in each lesson and check pupils' understanding at the end of the lesson. In the best lessons teachers check on progress during the lesson and this helps remind pupils what they are working towards, as well as letting the teacher know how well they are progressing. Pupils say that learning is fun, and this is because of the varied practical and 'real life activities' they do. The high quality displays of their Creative Journeys work demonstrate how well pupils work together to solve real life problems. Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils' learning moves at a brisk rate. This is most often seen in English, and less so in mathematics, where some teachers do not set challenging enough targets for independent work. The school is aware that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is generally more accurate in English than in mathematics and has the further development of assessment as a priority for next year.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is very well adapted to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Planning for mixed-age classes is good and ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have full access to the curriculum. Planning for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is very good. An excellent programme of personal, social and health education ensures pupils know the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, how to stay safe and how to be a good citizen. Provision for art and design and technology are excellent. Very good links with the local secondary school and outside agencies have extended and enriched pupils' learning in the arts, sport and technology. Pupils value the many after-school clubs that give them the opportunity to develop special interests or talents and like the fact that, in their words, there is 'something for children of all ages.' Well planned visits linked to specific curriculum topics are another feature of the provision that is much appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Parents are overwhelming in their praise for the way the school cares for their children. They are confident that their children are safe and secure and that staff place the children's happiness at the centre of their work. As one new parent commented, 'My child has changed from a sad little girl to a happy girl thanks to the staff at the school.' All procedures for ensuring child protection and safeguarding are in place. The school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Rigorous systems ensure that pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate support is provided for pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel valued and able to make the same progress in their learning as others. Guidance for learning is good overall, though more specific guidance is needed in mathematics to ensure that pupils make good progress. While teachers give advice to pupils on how to improve, they do not all check that this has been followed, so the impact is reduced.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very good leadership and high expectations of the headteacher have guaranteed the school's high reputation in the community, especially with parents. The headteacher and deputy have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through evaluation of the school's work. Actions are effectively raising standards as can be seen by the successful development in writing managed by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher has developed the role of middle managers very well, so that they too play a key role in improving the school. For example, the numeracy coordinator has a clear grasp of the issues around the dip in mathematics results in Key Stage 2, and has produced a very effective action plan that is already having an impact. The school's strong commitment to every child is clear and the special educational needs leader has been instrumental in developing effective systems to make sure that the needs of these pupils are known and met. Governors give good support to the school and have a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses from the headteacher's reports, though there is scope for increasing the regularity of their monitoring visits.

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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	3
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	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?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Age group

4–11

Inspection date(s)

14–15 July 2008

Inspection number

309804

16 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hetton Primary School, Sunderland, DH5 9ND

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently and for helping me to find out that the school you attend is a good one. This means that you are well taught and by working hard you achieve well and reach the standards expected for your age. I found out that you do really well in science, and design and technology, because you find learning in those subjects a lot of fun.

I thought your good behaviour and kindness to each other gave your school a very warm and happy feel to it. It was nice to see how well you work together in the good lessons your teachers plan for you. Your school helps you to develop very good personal qualities that will help you all through life. You are tolerant and caring, and such good citizens that you beat all the other schools in the city to win that lovely 'Shining through Citizenship' Award. No wonder your parents and teachers are very proud of you.

I could see that you enjoy a lot of different and exciting learning experiences from the beautiful displays around the school. Your work on Creative Journeys does you credit – such a lot of hard work done so carefully and by working together. Well done!

I think your school has just about everything right and there are only two things I have suggested to make it even better. One is to make sure that those of you in Key Stage 2 make better progress in your numeracy lessons. You can help by working as fast as you do in literacy and getting through more examples each lesson. The other is for children in the Reception class to learn more about letters and the sounds they make, so they can become good readers and writers.

Please pass on my thanks to your parents for sending in their responses to the questionnaires. They obviously love your school as much as you do, so many of them took the time to write lovely things about the school and your teachers. Finally my best wishes to you and all the adults in school for a good holiday and a happy start to the next year.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector