



The Hammond Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117282
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280032
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Colin Henderson LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cambrian Way
School category	Community		HP2 5TD
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01442 404020
Number on roll	197	Fax number	01442 404024
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Richard Clarke
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Miss. Gail Porterfield

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Hammond Primary is an average-size school that serves an area of considerable social deprivation. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is below average. The school has high pupil mobility in some year groups and a high level of staff change recently. The school has gained national accreditation for excellence in the public sector, the high quality of its basic skills teaching and its specialism in information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. It is valued highly by parents, reflected in such comments as, 'I am astounded at how much goes on at the school and what is achieved!' The leadership and management are highly effective, particularly the excellent leadership of the headteacher and her senior leadership team. They have established rigorous procedures to ensure that the school consistently provides a high quality education and all pupils achieve very well. The school has improved greatly since the last inspection, especially in the Foundation Stage and in ICT. It has a particularly clear and accurate picture of how well it is doing that coincides with that of inspectors, and is in a very good position to improve further. Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their schooling because of good teaching and very effective leadership. Many attain expected standards by the end of the Reception year, although literacy and numeracy skills remain weak. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully throughout the school and outstanding teaching in many classes helps pupils to make excellent progress and achieve very well overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards. More able pupils make very good progress as do those pupils who find learning difficult. A strong focus on reading in recent years has raised standards to consistently above average levels. Writing standards are not as high, as new initiatives have yet to be consistently established. Pupils do not receive consistently effective guidance to improve their writing. Standards in ICT are well above expectations because of the excellent resources, very good use of interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise. The vast majority of pupils behave exceptionally well and have excellent attitudes to learning. They clearly enjoy the outstanding range of learning activities. Pupils benefit from excellent personal care and support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on current practices to ensure that they are consistent in helping pupils know what they need to do to improve their writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Most children start in the nursery with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and numeracy. Good, and often outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that many children reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, except in literacy and numeracy because of the low starting points. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, continue to make excellent progress overall throughout the school to reach standards by the end of Year 6 that are above the national average, especially in mathematics and science. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection. This is clearly reflected in the results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, although there is some yearly variation due mainly to the high levels

of pupil mobility in some year groups. A significant proportion of more able Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age, especially in science. This is because the school tracks the progress of all pupils carefully and outstanding teaching and very good support extend their skills and knowledge. The school exceeded its challenging mathematics target in 2005, although it did not quite meet its target for English. The school targeted reading in recent years and this raised standards to consistently above average levels. A very recent focus on pupils' writing is beginning to improve standards, although it is not yet sufficiently established to attain standards similar to reading. Pupils' ICT skills are well above expected levels and they use their skills very successfully to support work in many other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and well-being of pupils reflect the hard work that staff devote to it. Behaviour is unfailingly good and is outstanding in lessons. Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic in their approach to learning. There are few disputes, because pupils are patient and relaxed. They enjoy school, and expect to participate and to understand their work. Whilst their punctuality is good, their attendance is broadly average, due to holidays taken in term time and time off due to sickness. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils clearly understand and follow school rules carefully. Good cultural development ensures that as well as valuing their own cultures, pupils learn about the beliefs and customs of others. This is enhanced by the governors employing a range of staff from different cultures. Pupils understand the principles of keeping themselves safe and work safely in school, for example, when serving themselves at lunchtimes. They are taught well about healthy lifestyles and try very hard to adopt them. The Extended Schooling initiative provides good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community. School council members set a good example in taking responsibility and seeking to help their peers. Pupils' good basic skills and their ability to plan and evaluate their own work provide a particularly sound basis for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and other resources imaginatively to create interesting lessons and promote an enjoyment of learning that is reflected in pupils' enthusiastic approach - 'lessons are fun!' Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully to ensure that they meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Key basic skills are taught very successfully and there are excellent opportunities for pupils to extend these skills in other subjects, particularly ICT. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to guide their teaching and to check that pupils are on track to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

The very good teamwork between teachers and support staff helps pupils to be included fully and achieve very well, especially those with educational difficulties. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they need to achieve to be successful in each lesson. They use a broad range of strategies, including effective marking and individual and group targets to improve pupils' written work. Teachers are encouraging pupils to use peer and self-assessment to understand how they can improve their written work. These strategies are beginning to raise standards, although they are not consistently established across all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from an outstanding curriculum where subjects are very carefully planned for different abilities. Individual needs are well catered for. Pupils who find learning difficult have good individual plans for their work. Pupils who are gifted and talented take on challenging activities in lessons as well as occasional additional extra-curricular classes. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a very thoroughly planned, creative range of activities that has improved considerably since the last inspection. Provision for ICT is outstanding. The efficient use of very well equipped ICT suites and classroom resources helps pupils in every class to improve their skills and use them to support learning in many other subjects. Coverage of literacy and numeracy is very thorough and very well supported by specific out-of-class activities. There are other popular clubs for sport and leisure pursuits, which encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The school energetically reviews and improves its curriculum. Particular successes include religious education and music, which were undeveloped, but are now well provided due to staff training and careful planning. The personal development programme is being renewed to ensure that pupils can deal with increasingly complex social and emotional responses and to prepare them for their adult lives. The school has added extra time to the teaching day to allow the full curriculum to be well taught.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. Staff are well trained and all the procedures needed to keep pupils safe are securely in place. Over recent years, careful contact with families has helped to improve pupils' attendance. This remains a strong focus for the school. Sensitive introduction to school helps the children feel secure. Pupils say that they are confident about approaching staff if they have a problem. The quality of the care they receive is outstanding. All staff know their pupils very well and work hard to meet their individual needs. Support for a healthy lifestyle is also outstanding. The school's decision to provide its own meals has resulted in a healthy, attractive diet for pupils. The breakfast club offers good morning care for a group of children who like their positive start to the day. All adults make very careful, regular assessments of pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils needing extra help are identified early and supported very effectively, with good use of external agencies where needed. The high quality care makes pupils feel valued and well looked

after, although guidance over how to improve their work is not so consistently established, particularly in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership and management are key factors in the school's success. The very positive and influential headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership and management teams and governors, provides outstanding leadership that is valued highly by parents. They have a very clear understanding of how well the school is doing, what it needs to do to improve further and how to achieve those improvements. This is because the school has excellent systems for checking its performance, which include seeking and acting upon the views of parents and pupils. This is shown in the excellent improvement since the last inspection. The rigorous evaluation of teaching has enabled the school to maintain a consistently high standard, despite a high level of staff change. The professional development of all staff has a high priority to ensure that the school successfully fulfils its mission statement - 'Success for all, through respect for all'. Teachers in charge of subjects have a very clear understanding of how well their subjects are doing, and the very effective leadership for pupils who find learning difficult helps them to make very good progress. All staff and pupils benefit from a high quality learning environment and excellent resources which encourage their enthusiastic participation. Governors have a good understanding of their roles. They use funds very successfully to support improvement and to evaluate their effectiveness.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. What we liked most about your school: - Your teachers and other adults care about you as individuals, make sure that you are safe and listen to your opinions about school. - You get on well together and are kind to each other. Your behaviour is excellent. - You get to school on time and clearly enjoy being there. This means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. - All the adults put a lot of effort into helping you do well and make your lessons interesting. You enjoy your work and try hard to do what your teachers ask. We think you learn very well. - Miss Porterfield, the teachers and governors who run your school are doing an outstanding job. They provide a very attractive school for you, with excellent resources, and they want to make it even better. - Teachers carefully check to see how well you are doing and try to ensure that lessons help you learn more. The teaching is outstanding. - Your parents think it is a very good school, and we agree. What we have asked the school to do now: - Continue to help you to know what you need to do next to improve your writing. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard.