

Hallow CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116882
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	290668
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Ikin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	195
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Griffin
Headteacher	Simon Stubbs
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002
School address	Main Road Hallow Worcester WR2 6LD
Telephone number	01905 640354
Fax number	01905 642870

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This village school is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for 18 months and the school was in the middle of building works.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The inspection findings confirm the school's own view that the education it currently provides is inadequate. However, it is beginning to improve as a result of strong and determined leadership of the headteacher and the good support given by his deputy. They have worked very effectively with staff and pupils to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes. These were key weaknesses when the headteacher took up his post, and are now good. One parent, summing up the views of many, commented, 'Mr Stubbs has made a big difference, children's behaviour is much better and they seem to enjoy school more.'

Although standards are average, this represents inadequate achievement in relation to pupils' starting points on entry to the school. Standards declined sharply in the two years following the last inspection but they have now begun to pick up in English, largely because of the school's work to improve the teaching of writing. However, standards and achievement in mathematics have continued to slide and are well below average. Teaching and learning are inadequate because they are not having a sufficient impact on pupils' progress. There are early signs of improvement but these improvements are not yet sufficiently embedded throughout the school. Whilst pupils make good progress in some lessons, they fall back in others. Nearly all pupils underachieve in mathematics because of weaknesses in planning for progression. More able pupils do not do as well as they should because the teachers' expectations of them are too low and there is insufficient planning for their needs. Marking does not always help pupils improve and pupils are not involved enough in checking their own work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress in English but they do not do as well as they should in mathematics.

Provision for pupils' pastoral care and their health and safety is good. However, the use of assessment and target setting to support pupils' academic progress is inadequate. As a result, care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good opportunities for visits and visitors and a very wide range of after-school activities. Whilst provision for children in Reception is satisfactory, planning is not always rigorous enough and activities are often too easy for more able children.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school recognises its weaknesses, has already rectified some areas for improvement and is now addressing the right priorities to make it more effective. It is soundly placed to improve further.

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: pupils' achievement, the effectiveness of teaching and the use of assessment in meeting the full range of learners' needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for problem solving and calculation and set work at a more demanding level to raise standards in mathematics.
- Provide more able pupils with work that challenges them more effectively.
- Improve teaching and learning and ensure that all marking helps pupils know what they must do to improve their work.

- Use assessment and target setting more effectively to plan for pupils' different needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is a little higher than usually found. Most children make satisfactory progress during the Reception Year and reach the goals expected for children of this age. Although overall standards in the rest of the school are average, it is only in Year 4 where pupils make consistently good progress. Pupils progress in other year groups varies between satisfactory and inadequate resulting in inadequate achievement overall, particularly for more able pupils. Standards and achievement are beginning to rise in English as a result of intensive training to improve teaching methods in writing. Standards are well below average in mathematics. Most pupils underachieve because work is not pitched at a demanding enough level and there is insufficient attention to helping them make progress in calculation and problem solving. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory in English because of a clear focus on their particular needs in small group sessions. However, their progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well developed sense of fair play. Pupils respond positively when given responsibility, for example through the Eco Committee which promotes recycling and energy conservation. Pupils' behaviour is good and they usually concentrate well on their tasks. Their attention wavers when they are required to listen to their teachers for too long or when tasks are too easy. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. However, too many parents take their children on holiday in term-time and attendance is satisfactory rather than good because of this. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, they know the importance of exercise and some pupils grow their own organic vegetables at school. Despite pupils' good social skills and ability to work together constructively, weaknesses in aspects of their academic progress mean pupils' overall preparation for their future lives is only just adequate.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall. Pupils do not make the progress and achieve the standards they should because lessons are too variable in quality. There are signs of improvement, particularly in writing, but it is only in Year 4 that consistently good teaching and learning occur. All teachers make successful use of interactive whiteboards to make learning more interesting for pupils and there is generally good management of behaviour. However, the expectations that teachers have of their pupils are not high enough in some lessons and planning does not take sufficient account of the different needs of pupils. As a result, lower attainers struggle to keep up and more able pupils do not receive the challenge they need. This is most noticeable in mathematics. Teachers' marking, the use of assessment and setting targets to guide planning and help pupils know what they have to do to improve is inadequate. Play

activities in the in the Reception class are not sufficiently adapted to the different needs of pupils, particularly the more able, who often find them too easy and quickly lose interest.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Whole-school planning ensures breadth and balance in the subjects of the National Curriculum. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT), a weakness during the last inspection, is now satisfactory. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good and contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Very good use is made of visits and visitors and links with schools in other European countries to bring learning to life. A very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of all ages contributes well to their enjoyment of school. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument, for example, all pupils learn to play the recorder. Although the curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in English, it does not always do so in mathematics. The needs of more able pupils are not always met because the work they are given is often too easy. Increasing attention given to the use of literacy in other subjects is beginning to improve pupils' progress in writing. Not enough attention is yet given to the links that can be made between mathematics and other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with key strengths in the quality of pastoral care but weaknesses in pupils' academic guidance and support. Pupils feel safe and secure, and know that staff will listen if there are any problems. Parents are justifiably confident that pupils are looked after well at school. Child protection procedures are sound and regular health and safety checks are carried out. Well thought out procedures help children to settle quickly into the Reception class and to move on confidently at the end of Year 6. Pupils benefit from good support for their personal development but the use of assessment to support and guide their academic progress is inadequate. Satisfactory systems have been introduced to set targets and track pupils' progress, across the school. However, these procedures have yet to be securely embedded and information is not always used effectively to help pupils know how they are getting on and to guide their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are improving, and are now satisfactory. The headteacher is clear thinking and has good leadership and management skills. He has worked tenaciously to secure school improvement since his appointment in September 2005. His monitoring and evaluation procedures are rigorous and mean that he has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. At present, too much responsibility for setting and achieving the school's goals rests on the headteacher's shoulders. Although the deputy headteacher fulfils his role well, middle managers have made insufficient impact on school improvement. However, the situation is changing. The rigour of monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders is beginning to improve and they are increasingly providing their colleagues with valuable advice. There is a more unified approach to school improvement, for example in writing, and staff now share a common determination to make the school more effective. The school development plan

identifies the right priorities and these are being soundly addressed. As a result, there have been some significant improvements, most notably in pupils' progress in writing and in ICT provision. The work of governors is sound, and they have increased their understanding of data so they now have a realistic view of the school's performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hallow Church of England Primary School, Hallow, WR2 6LD

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you like your school, but we feel that it is not yet giving you a satisfactory standard of education. Although standards of work are broadly average, except in mathematics, you are not doing as well as you should be, particularly those of you who are more able, because teaching and learning are not yet good enough.

What we like about your school:

- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are doing a good job in helping the school to get better and the support that others give in the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory.
- Teachers are helping you to do better in writing.
- You behave well and look after the school and each other well.
- You receive a satisfactory curriculum and a good range of after-school activities.
- Staff take good care of you and help you to understand how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

What we think needs to be improved:

- You need more help to achieve better standards in mathematics, especially in problem solving and calculation.
- Some of you need to be given harder work in order to reach the standards of which you are capable.
- Your teachers need to make more comments on your work when they mark it to let you know what you need to do to improve.
- When planning lessons teachers need to take more account of what you already know and what you need to achieve by the end of each year.

During the year other inspectors will visit the school to check how it is getting on. You can help in all this by continuing to behave well, getting to know what your targets are and working hard to reach them.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Ikin Lead inspector