



Little Harrowden Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 121842
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292237
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Little Harrowden
Age range of pupils	4–11		Wellingborough NN9 5BN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01933 677202
Number on roll (school)	197	Fax number	01933 679458
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Angela Packwood
		Headteacher	Tim Hill
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006	Inspection number 292237
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Little Harrowden Primary is a fairly small school. Most of its pupils are White British. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups and some of these are in the early stages of learning English. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently, children start school with a range of abilities that are similar to those expected for their age but in the past, many cohorts have had a wider range of skills and experiences. The school was judged as having serious weaknesses at the previous inspection. Over the last two years, many of the teachers and other staff have changed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Little Harrowden is a rapidly improving school that has eradicated the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This is because of the outstanding and dynamic leadership of the headteacher. He has been ably supported by the capable senior management team and together they have created a new staff who are committed to improvement. The school's overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Standards in Year 6 have risen since the last inspection and are above the national average. This is the result of satisfactory achievement rather than good, because this cohort attained high standards in Year 2. Despite reaching above average standards, some pupils could have achieved more. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of lessons is improving as effective teaching strategies are more consistently applied throughout the school. Teaching is consistently good in the Reception class and good teaching is increasingly evident in other year groups. A strong focus has been placed on providing greater challenge for pupils and this is resulting in better progress although there is more to do to make sure that all teaching provides the extra degree of challenge. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has also improved and many achieve well. Pupils of all abilities are well prepared for the next stages of education and the world of work. A good curriculum that is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities supports pupils' learning and extends their experiences. The school is successfully making activities interesting but has yet to consistently plan activities that extend pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through other subjects. The good provision for pupils' care, support and guidance underpins their good levels of personal development and well-being. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and want to do well. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are caring and supportive of each other. They have a good understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.

Leadership and management are good. The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators have significantly improved and this is also having a positive impact on improving teaching and raising standards. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, which are based on rigorous systems of monitoring. Governors are well informed. They evaluate their own work satisfactorily and provide challenge for the headteacher and staff. Taking the school's recent record of improvements and the strong ethos for continued development, it has a good capacity for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by ensuring effective teaching strategies are used consistently through the school and pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged.
- Introduce more effective ways of using pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a range of different subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Current levels of achievement are satisfactory although pupils reach above average standards. Children make a good start in the Reception class and achieve well. By the time they transfer into Year 1, standards are often above those expected. Standards in Year 2 are above average but have often been higher in the past with a good number of pupils attaining well above average standards. Progress in Years 1 and 2 has fluctuated. It is now satisfactory and improving once again. Pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 was inadequate at the last inspection and standards slumped. Current rates of progress are satisfactory because of teachers' higher expectations and more effective teaching. There is evidence of good progress in many lessons and more pupils are now achieving well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve particularly well because they are taught effectively. The pupils at an early stage of learning English also make good progress because they get effective support to ensure that the work is matched to their needs. The progress of more able pupils has improved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Good attitudes and exemplary behaviour are the norm and these are underpinned by very good relationships. Pupils say bullying is rare and that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and helps them develop a sensitive approach to life and to appreciate the achievement of others. Although satisfactory, pupils' awareness of multi-cultural issues is the weakest aspect of their personal development. Pupils contribute well to the school and local communities. The school and class councils are effective in contributing to the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils raise funds for charities and take part in activities that develop skills in negotiating and decision-making as, for example, in purchasing lockers for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Work related to the school's achieving 'Healthy School' status has given pupils a secure understanding of the need for safety, regular exercise and healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection especially in Years 3 to 6. Examples of effective teaching were observed throughout the school but it is not yet consistently good. This is because strategies for promoting pupils' effective learning are still new for some teachers and work does not always build sufficiently well on what pupils already know and can do. In the Reception class, there is a good balance of teacher-led activities alongside independently chosen tasks

that support and encourage children's good learning. In other lessons, teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and these, combined with the brisk pace, result in pupils' eager participation in activities. Thorough planning based on information from ongoing assessment determines what is to be taught next. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are expected to learn and set tasks that are increasingly well matched to their differing needs. Teachers frequently make effective use of 'talk partners' in order to involve all pupils and to help them to clarify their thinking. Teachers' marking of pupils' work gives learners a clear understanding of what they should do to improve. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good basis for learning in the Reception class and throughout the school. It is enhanced by many additional activities and visits that extend pupils' interest, knowledge and skills. The curriculum plays an important part in promoting pupils' personal development. There is a good emphasis on supporting pupils' understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles. The ICT curriculum is much improved. It plays an increasing part in supporting pupils' learning, but as yet there has been insufficient planning of how pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are applied and extended through other subjects. The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the need of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those pupils who are at the early stage of learning English are helped and supported to gain full access to the lessons. Gifted and talented pupils are given many more opportunities to extend their skills in subjects such as art, music and sport than is seen in most schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents commented that children thrive under the school's care. Very good relationships throughout the school means pupils are confident to approach adults with any problems. A strong focus is given to promoting pupils' safety. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are rigorous. Arrangements to help children settle into Reception, and to transfer to secondary school, are smooth. This helps pupils become confident in dealing with new situations. Pupils' academic guidance, including their individual targets for improvement, is good, particularly in English and mathematics. Targets give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to improve. Personal support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective. Their needs and difficulties are carefully identified and individual targets for their progress are set and regularly monitored. The needs of gifted and talent pupils are also met in many areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. His strong sense of purpose and high expectations has effectively secured school improvement. There is a clear focus on raising achievement and on developing good levels of care for all pupils. The work of other relatively new members of the senior management team is also having a beneficial impact on improving teaching and achievement. Thorough systems for checking the work of the school are used to identify where weaknesses lie and successful strategies for improvement are developed. Governors, staff and parents are consulted effectively about how well the school is moving forward. Many parents commented on how much the school has improved in the last year. The priorities for school development are well founded and based on an accurate evaluation of the school's provision. The role of the subject coordinators has significantly improved and is now good. It is most effective in mathematics, English, ICT and science, which has resulted in clear areas of improvement and higher standards. Staff say they understand what is expected of them, feel well supported by the senior staff and are empowered to carry out their responsibilities. Many initiatives are still new and not yet fully embedded but they are already resulting in improvements. The role of governors has been strengthened and they play a satisfactory part in strategic planning and in holding the school to account.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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	3
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

I am writing to thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our work. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school.

What we liked about the school:

- it is a rapidly improving school where you are happy and enjoy your lessons
- you get on exceedingly well with each other and with the adults in the school
- your behaviour is excellent and you try hard to do well in your work
- you understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe
- you are given opportunities to take responsibility and you do it well
- you try hard to help other people at school, in the community and around the world
- teachers help you to understand how to get better at your work
- you have lots of additional activities that make the work planned for you interesting
- all the adults in school look after you well and help you feel safe
- the headteacher leads and manages the school extremely well. The senior teachers help him and all the staff are eager to make the school as good as possible.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- we have asked teachers to make all your lessons effective so that you make good progress in your work
- we have asked that you are given more opportunities to practise your skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT in many different subjects and get better at your work.

Thank you again for being so polite and helping us with our questions.