

# The Hammond Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117282
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326563
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nichola Perry

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	230
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Dean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Gail Porterfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cambrian Way Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 5TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 404020
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 404024

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-size school that serves an area which experiences significant socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Numbers of pupils from ethnic minority groups and those whose first language is not English have increased and are now slightly above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. Of these, some have social or emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery class and a Reception class. They start school with levels of knowledge and understanding which are significantly below that expected for their age in all areas of learning, but most notably in key areas of communication and language, and personal development. The school has high pupil mobility in some year groups. Recently there has also been a high turnover of staff, mainly due to promotion.

The school has gained a very wide range of awards including, most recently, the Basic Skills Mark, Investors in People, Inclusion Mark and the BECTA ICT Mark. The Headteacher is involved in a wide range of additional professional activities. She is a Leadership Consultant and a School Improvement Partner for the Local Authority.

The school has a privately funded nursery provision called The Bees Knees Day Nursery. This was inspected separately at the same as this inspection. A report is available from Ofsted.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding quality of education. Pupils unreservedly love coming to this exciting and dynamic school where they consider 'learning is such fun!' This is because the headteacher, very ably supported by her deputy and assistant headteachers, provides strong and highly effective leadership which leaves no room for complacency. She has created a school where every adult and child feels valued for what they offer, at the same time as maintaining a relentless focus on ensuring all pupils are able to achieve as well as they can. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the level of care and quality of learning that their children receive. A parent, reflecting the views of many, summed up the school by saying 'the level of education is beyond my highest expectations'.

Teaching and learning are exemplary, and as a result, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve exceptionally well from their starting points, reaching standards above the national average by the time they leave. Lessons exude fun and happiness and pupils clearly enjoy being challenged and involved in active learning. Attendance is above average. Pupils' pride in their learning and achievements is tangible, whether it is because they have achieved their learning target, the attendance cup for the best class, the tidiest classroom award or a certificate for being helpful.

Pupils of all abilities are extremely confident and socially adaptable, although many do not have a naturally wide vocabulary. Behaviour is exemplary. The school is exceptionally effective in making sure that pupils understand how to stay safe. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of regular exercise and a balanced, healthy diet. They have an effective 'voice' in school matters and have duly influenced developments such as enhancing playground equipment and choosing food for school lunches. Above average standards, exceptional social skills, willingness to take responsibility and their excellent ability to work together means they have excellent skills for life and are very well prepared for future stages in their education.

Leaders ensure that the school reaches out and fully involves parents and the local community. It does an excellent job in developing pupils' awareness of their place in a global community. Governors, led by an exceptionally able and forward looking chair, provide excellent support and challenge as partners in pupils' learning and development. The highly relevant and exciting curriculum ensures that pupils are aware of different beliefs and cultures in local and wider societies. This, combined with pupils' lively contribution to school activities, such as International Week, their awareness of the needs of others and email interactions with international contacts, makes community cohesion outstanding.

Improvement since the last inspection is excellent and this, along with the school's strong leadership and willingness to be innovative, means that its capacity to improve in the future is outstanding.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Parents are delighted with the start their children have. Effective teaching and a strong focus on a continuous curriculum, which takes good account of children's needs and interests, is successfully closing gaps in children's early learning skills so that they make good progress. High commitment and good modelling of social interaction by all adults, helps children make speedy progress in developing good personal, social and emotional skills. Independence is

promoted well through play activities across all areas of learning. For example, children are allowed to snack on a range of healthy foods whenever they feel hungry or in need of a drink. Staff have high expectations that children will try things out for themselves and provide many opportunities for children to adapt activities. The good start children receive in the Nursery is effectively developed in the Reception class, where the teaching of language skills is outstanding. The curriculum and learning are well planned around play activities, which children select for themselves, and very focused teaching. Consequently, children leave Reception with positive attitudes to learning, the ability to sustain interest in activities and achieve standards that have risen from well below to below expected levels.

The safety and well-being of children is promoted strongly at all times. Staff are vigilant in ensuring good hygiene practices. The newly appointed leader has made a good start in fully implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Her developing leadership skills reflect good understanding of how young children learn. Assessment is now regularly recorded with clear evidence to support judgements. Assessment folders are readily available to parents. They are increasingly accessible to children so that they can see the progress that they are making and also select examples of their work or photographs to be included. Planning is being developed so that activities can be readily adapted to meet individual needs or interests, with focused support where it is most needed. Inclusion of children who are able or who struggle with learning is excellent. Relationships and communication with parents are extremely effective. They are well informed about their children's welfare and their progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend pupils' vocabulary by devising a programme which draws on their own experience, leading to more dynamic writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enter Year 1 with knowledge and understanding in all areas that are below those expected for their age. Learning is very successfully developed in Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 attainment is consistently in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there was a dip in reading and mathematics in 2008, assessments in 2009 show that standards are back in line with the national average. This is supported by inspection evidence.

Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 5, accelerating to exceptional progress in Year 6. They reach above average standards overall in national tests and assessments and well above average standards in mathematics. This represents outstanding progress and achievement from their starting points. Inspection evidence confirms the current Year 5 are on track to maintain these at least above average standards.

Pupils also do exceedingly well in other subjects, most notably in information and communication technology (ICT) and in art, reaching above average standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils contribute significantly to the many successes of the school and add much to the school's family ethos. They care deeply about their teachers and friends and show a very mature sense

of justice and fair play. This is demonstrated in their excellent behaviour. Pupils have great enthusiasm and enjoy learning greatly.

The school has implemented a super range of strategies to improve attendance from below to above average in recent years. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are keen to succeed but also demonstrate the highest respect for each other and the feelings and beliefs of others. They show excellent understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity as a result of regular themed weeks and events and a wide range of visits and visitors. The contribution pupils make to the school and wider community is excellent. Older pupils relish opportunities to act as 'buddies' for younger children. Pupils enthusiastically take on a range of responsibilities, such as head boy and head girl, and help raise funds for many charities and the school, often instigating initiatives themselves. Add to this pupils' outstanding achievements and awareness of how to keep fit, healthy and safe, and it is clear why pupils leave the school extremely well prepared for secondary school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching, supported by an outstanding and vibrant curriculum, very successfully captures pupils' enthusiasm for learning. It inspires them to see themselves as achievers and exceptional learners. Teachers take enormous care to plan stimulating activities which are both challenging and thought provoking. They are matched very well to pupils' needs and interests so that they all make outstanding progress. Teachers consistently challenge pupils, provide encouragement and celebrate pupils' successes so that pupils are always aware of how well they are performing and how they can improve their work. Marking, an issue at the last inspection, is now exceptional and maintains a meaningful and ongoing dialogue with pupils so that they are real partners in their learning. Excellent relationships between pupils and all adults in the school, and between the pupils themselves, lay the foundation for pupils to become confident and independent learners from the Nursery upwards. Assessment is excellent. Information is used very effectively to track pupils' progress accurately and to plan next stages in learning through highly challenging targets, which are reviewed and set termly, shared with and known well by all pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum places significant emphasis on the development of skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy. Recently, there has been excellent progress in developing writing across all subjects, leading to further improvement in achievement. However, pupils' vocabulary is relatively limited and requires further development. Lessons very effectively identify links between subjects, to support and extend pupils' learning. As a result, pupils have a broad perspective of the world in which they live. ICT is exceptionally well integrated into lessons and adds significantly to pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils are given many high-quality opportunities to participate in practical activities across the curriculum which further stimulates their love of learning. Pupils also have very well developed skills in art which are shown to full effect in the stunning displays in classrooms and around the school. Pupils have good opportunities to play musical instruments and learn advanced skills in mathematics, and older pupils learn French. The curriculum includes an excellent personal and social education programme as well as outstanding enrichment

activities that include themed events, residential and day visits, visitors to the school and a diverse range of school clubs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school is a very caring community. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety meet requirements fully. All staff are sensitive to pupils' academic, personal and social needs. Pupils are totally confident in approaching any adult, should they experience personal or academic problems, to seek the help they need. More able pupils are given excellent opportunities to extend their learning, and inclusion and support for pupils who find learning more difficult is outstanding. Creative distribution of additional staffing means pupils are often taught individually or in small groups which contributes strongly to outstanding progress and achievement. The intervention team carry out excellent work with parents and their children. They help them to understand what their children are learning and how they can help by becoming actively involved. Excellent support is offered to children and their families who may experience social or emotional problems. Great care is taken to promote pupils' emotional development, thereby laying excellent foundations for their academic success. Robust and well-developed systems for monitoring pupils' progress ensure staff have a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs. Pupils' regularly assess their own work and frequent reference to targets during lessons and in marking helps to support their progress very effectively. Early identification of barriers to learning, together with careful monitoring of support enables pupils to develop their own strategies to overcome any difficulties.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are exemplary. The headteacher and staff are innovative and strive for constant improvement. Support for, and expectations of, staff at all levels is outstanding, encouraging them to develop their skills and adopt new ideas. Procedures to evaluate the school's performance are very rigorous and accurately identify priorities for further improvement. Governors do an outstanding job. They are proactive and well informed about the work of the school and thus they are increasingly effective in holding leaders to account. They have made particularly impressive progress in developing the community cohesion agenda. In partnership with the headteacher and senior leadership team, governors ensure that extremely challenging targets are set for attainment. Resources are monitored and used very effectively. The school has a well-trained, skilful group of teaching assistants, support and administrative staff who all make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and the management of the school.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

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

29 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Hammond Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5TD

You may recall that Mr Jones and I visited you recently to inspect your school. We agree with you that you go to a super school and we can see why you all love it so much. We were thrilled by what we saw and think that Miss Porterfield and all the staff provide you with an outstanding quality of education.

You make outstanding progress in both your academic and personal development. This is because your teachers are brilliant at making learning so enjoyable and always encouraging you to do your best. The staff make sure that you are safe and secure in school and that you have all the equipment you need to help you learn as well as possible. It was lovely to see how well you all behave and how hard you work in lessons. Among the great pleasures of our visit was seeing you serve lunches to other pupils and your parents. We are sorry that we couldn't join you on that day but we made sure we found time to have lunch with you the next day, which we enjoyed very much. We also saw that many of you are excellent at using the super computers you have in school.

Miss Porterfield and the staff are always looking for ways to make sure that your school remains as good as it can be. With this in mind we have asked her to:

- find some really exciting ways to help you learn lots more 'wow' words to use and include in your writing so that it is as good as some of the books in your school.

Well done and thank you for talking to us and for being so courteous and helpful.

Very best wishes

Nichola Perry

Lead inspector