

Hipswell Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121499
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314010
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Wort
Headteacher	Mr Jon Sykes
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Hipswell Catterick Garrison North Yorkshire DL9 4BB
Telephone number	01748 832513
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and most are from White British families. Approximately two thirds of pupils are from service families based at Catterick Garrison. About half have a family member who has been on recent, active deployment in various parts of the world. Pupils are continually leaving and arriving at the school because of the military connection. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall but is sometimes well above average in a particular year group. An unusually large number of pupils is currently experiencing social or emotional difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which enables its pupils to achieve well academically and make outstanding progress in their personal development. It manages successfully the very high number of pupils arriving and leaving throughout the year and provides excellent support for a large number of vulnerable pupils. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and delighted that their children are happy and have such positive attitudes towards their education. An essential ingredient in the success of the school is the outstanding pastoral care provided for pupils. Working very well with parents and agencies such as the Army Welfare Service, the school does everything it can to provide a calm, supportive environment and to minimise the disruptive effect of changing schools. The following comment is typical of many: 'The teachers have been very understanding. Because of them, my child has been given a good chance of catching up on things he has missed through moving so often.' Pupils feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy their school life. They speak with pride about their teachers, friends and the facilities the school provides. Their outstanding personal development is reflected in the care they show for one another and their mature demeanour in class. Through the work of the school council, fund-raising and links with the village, church and garrison, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community.

Children's attainment on entry to school is below national expectations. Children make a flying start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress through Years 1 to 6 and reach average standards at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement, especially considering the amount of disruption most pupils experience in their schooling, and is the result of good teaching and a well planned, interesting curriculum. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and the pace of lessons is now brisk. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well, sometimes better than their peers, because of the good support provided for them. However, more able pupils do not always spend enough time working on activities at their ability level. On these occasions they do not make as much progress as they might. Curriculum enrichment is outstanding. A wide variety of visitors, educational visits and termly themed weeks contribute to pupils' enjoyment and personal development.

The academic guidance provided for the majority of pupils is good, developing their understanding of their achievements and ability to evaluate their own work. However, the process is not extended well enough to meet the needs of more able pupils who are capable of dealing with more challenge and in-depth analysis of their work and who require more information about how to improve. The school has good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Challenging targets are set and varied according to the abilities of the pupils. However, pupils' success in meeting these targets is inconsistent, partly because the school is not rigorous enough in checking progress term by term to ensure that pupils reach their targets by the end of the school year.

Under the energetic and enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher, the staff work very well together, as a team, in the interests of the pupils. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear plan of action is in place to bring about improvements. The school has made very good progress in dealing with the issues raised at the last inspection. This progress and recent improvements, particularly in writing and science, are an indication of the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with attainment levels which are below those expected for their age. Their language skills are particularly weak. Good leadership and provision enable them to make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Staff provide a very friendly and caring environment for new children and their parents and, as a result, children settle in quickly. Exceptionally good use is made of the outdoor areas where children enjoy a wide range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Children from the Nursery and Reception class are often brought together for specific learning opportunities and to assist transition from the Nursery into the Reception class. Relationships between adults and teachers are very good. Both classes are very well organised. The children understand what is expected of them and they quickly acquire a range of good learning habits. Close attention is given to developing children's social and speaking skills. As a result of this good provision, most children attain the levels expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the academic challenge and guidance for more able pupils in order to ensure that they make as much progress as possible.
- Review assessment information more often and with greater rigour, taking appropriate action to ensure that more pupils reach their challenging targets at the end of each year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a below average starting point, pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach average standards overall at the end of Year 6. They achieve well. The school's national test results are not always the best measure of the school's achievements because of small cohorts and very high pupil mobility. Of the pupils who took the latest Year 6 tests, nearly half were admitted after the beginning of Year 5. Staff have been working hard to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. In the 2007 tests and assessments, they were pleased to see an increase in the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the higher level expected of them in writing and an improvement in science to above average standards in Year 6. Challenging targets are set for pupils but their success is inconsistent. Although staff analyse pupils' progress carefully, especially after end of year tests, this is not done regularly enough, term by term, to ensure that all pupils reach their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. During the inspection it was enhanced by the school's provision of an exciting range of music and cultural activities in a 'Multicultural Week'. Comments by pupils such as, 'We think this is a very friendly school that makes you smile,' illustrate their enjoyment of school. The school council represents the views and wishes of pupils across the school. As parents say, 'Children are not afraid to make comments and suggestions as they know they will be given a listening ear.' The council members are proud of their recent initiatives to help younger pupils with their reading and to provide more litterbins in the playground. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, despite the school's best

efforts to improve it, but is not an indication of any lack of enthusiasm on the pupils' part. Punctuality is good. Pupils develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, thereby developing attributes which will serve them well in the future and help them deal with the challenges they face outside school. Pupils enjoy physical education and sport and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, demonstrated by the increasing number of pupils taking advantage of healthy meals at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well because teachers have high expectations and provide clear guidance and routines. As a result, good use is made of time. Teachers provide interesting activities which usually meet the needs of pupils well. However, most lessons are focused at the middle ability group with the result that more able pupils do not always make as much progress as they might because they do not have enough time to work on activities at their own level. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are well supported throughout the lesson, enabling them to make good progress. The purpose of each lesson is made clear and pupils are frequently encouraged to reflect on their success in meeting the lesson objective. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards to enliven lessons and illustrate their teaching points. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, were absorbed in a mathematics lesson on time and time zones because of strong teaching supported by the use of a website; they found this extremely interesting and motivating and a spur to lively discussion of the topic in hand.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum has a clear focus on promoting basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school's success in these areas has been acknowledged by its receipt of the 'Basic Skills Quality Mark'. Literacy is taught across other subjects of the curriculum and this promotes pupils' interest and progress in reading and writing. A number of initiatives, including a specialist reading recovery programme, are used to very good effect to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although some special events are organised for gifted and talented pupils, there is little special provision for more able pupils in day-to-day teaching.

An outstanding range of events such as Circus Day and a skipping workshop enriches the curriculum. Visitors, including an author and artists, and opportunities for pupils to visit, study and work in the local and wider environment, such as the recent Foundation Stage trip to 'Funky Farm', further enhance their enjoyment and learning. Lessons in personal, social and health education, and events such as the Year 5 and Year 6 health and safety visit to 'Crucial Crew' help to promote pupils' good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. A good range of clubs including football, recorders, netball, PE multi-skills and culture workshops, add significantly to the many opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development and self-confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teaching and support staff take every opportunity to enhance the care and support for all pupils, especially the unusually large number experiencing social or emotional difficulties. As

a result of this outstanding care and support, pupils thrive in their personal development. Those experiencing difficulties are able to gain control of their emotions and play a full part in school life. Procedures to promote pupils' safety are securely in place and regularly reviewed.

Pupils have a target for English and mathematics each half term and these are regularly referred to in lessons. This provides lower attaining pupils with good support and helps them to develop an understanding of their achievements. However, the process is not extended to meet the needs of more able pupils who require a greater range of advice about their achievements and, crucially, what they need to do to improve further. Marking is mainly congratulatory and comments usually relate to the fact that the pupil has met the learning objective of the lesson with little detail about next steps.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The day-to-day management of the school is calm and effective, promoting a friendly, happy atmosphere in which every child and member of staff feels valued. The strong leadership provided by the headteacher is highly valued by parents and governors alike. They particularly appreciate the improvement in pupils' behaviour partly brought about by the creation of a more purposeful playtime environment with better equipment and facilities. Subject leaders have clear responsibilities and time to carry them out. As a result of their efforts, there has been an improvement in standards in writing, mathematics and science. The school has a keen understanding of its strengths and weaknesses brought about by frequent discussions between staff, lesson observations and checking pupils' work. Governors are strongly supportive of the school and have good procedures in place to monitor its activities and effectiveness. In the face of considerable challenges, the strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that everyone connected with the school is positive and optimistic about the future.

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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	3
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?	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.

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	3
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**

Inspection of Hipswell Church of England Primary School, Hipswell, DL9 4BB

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. You are proud of your school and have every right to be so. Your school gives you a good education.

Good things about your school

- You make good progress in your work and standards at the end of Year 6 are average overall.
- You behave very well and your personal development is outstanding. Although your attendance is satisfactory, you really enjoy your lessons and get on very well with all the adults in school.
- You appreciate the many visits and events which the teachers organise to make your lessons more exciting.
- The adults in school take extremely good care of you, especially when you are facing problems.
- Your school is well organised and adults are working hard together to make it even better.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Give some of you more time to spend on work which challenges you so that you make as much progress as possible. Also, to give you more information about what you need to do to improve your work.
- Check your work even more thoroughly each term and see if anything else can be done to ensure that more of you reach your targets in the end of year tests.

You can help, too, by coming to school as often as possible, continuing to work hard and looking after each other as well as you do now.

We wish you very well for the future.