



Howley Grange Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103814
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 276998
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew McDowall HMIHMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Howley Grange Road
School category	Community		Halesowen
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands B62 0HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818395
Number on roll	419	Fax number	01384 818396
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Hocking
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr M James

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	276998

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a large primary school situated on the edge of Halesowen in Dudley. The school takes the majority of its pupils from the immediate area, which consists of mixed housing with average levels of social deprivation. The school is popular and is oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the number learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for ten weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in Years 1 to 6 make good progress and standards are good in all subjects. The children make satisfactory progress in the reception classes. The school has improved the teaching of early reading but the way emergent writing is developed in the youngest children does not build on this.

The pupils are very well cared for. The teachers provide a comprehensive range of work and activities for the pupils who join in enthusiastically and really enjoy school. The quality of relationships amongst the people working at the school is very good and this makes a very positive contribution to the success of the school, as everyone wants the very best for the pupils.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Attendance is good and the pupils behave well in and around school. The school provides exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the world of business and commerce.

The senior staff lead the school well and have the confidence of both parents and staff. The new headteacher has made a good start and has brought a fresh perspective to the school. Not enough use is made currently of the information the school has on standards in English and mathematics to plan ways to raise standards further. The governors know the school well and share a common vision for the next stage in the school's development. However, the ways in which the governors measure the impact of their decisions and check on the academic standards in the school lack sufficient rigour. The school leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school and are taking the necessary action to bring about improvement.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve in the future.

Grade: 2

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the information gathered from assessing pupils' work to identify relative weaknesses and then take the action needed to improve it.
- Improve the way the youngest children are taught to write, by giving them more opportunities to write for themselves.
- Improve the ways in which the governors measure how well the school is doing by having a greater focus on the academic standards.

Achievement and standards

When the children start in the reception classes they have a wide range of skills and knowledge, but in general they are typical of children this age. They make satisfactory progress overall during their time in the reception classes. Standards in speaking and listening, personal development and creative development are good. However, progress in the development of early writing is less than satisfactory.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are generally good at the end of Year 2. They were lower in 2005 than in previous years, but still average. Well targeted support is already raising standards in Year 3. The results in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 6 showed very good standards in science and mathematics and above average standards in English. The school is now setting demanding targets to raise standards even further and is beginning to put in place programmes linked to these. For example, additional writing groups and a focus on reading comprehension are challenging pupils well in Years 3 to 6 and have already had a positive impact on their confidence and progress. In all other subjects, standards and progress are at least good.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school modestly judged it to be good but inspection evidence demonstrated it was better than this. Pupils really enjoy their school life. They arrive punctually and attend regularly. It is clear from the very positive attitudes that almost all pupils exhibit that they feel very happy, safe and secure in school. In lessons the vast majority behave very well. They offer opinions freely, enjoy taking responsibility and show exceptionally high levels of enthusiasm, involvement and confidence.

There is an excellent school council, which is democratically elected. It has implemented several improvements to the daily life of the school, having a particularly positive impact on the healthy eating initiative. Pupils value the opportunity to make suggestions through their elected representatives, or through the suggestion boxes in their classrooms.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the activities planned for them and the many after school clubs. They have developed some exciting links with Kenya, for example, helping to extend their understanding of the wider world and places that are different from their own. There are many opportunities for pupils to celebrate or reflect on different religious festivals, and they regularly raise money for charities in the local area and beyond.

All Year 6 pupils develop high quality work-place skills as they organise, manage and run the school shop. Excellent links with local businesses result in very good preparation for pupils' future economic well-being.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage where there is a high level of care and concern for children. However, opportunities are missed to develop early writing skills.

In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good. The teachers know the pupils well. The pace of lessons is lively and teachers plan interesting activities and use carefully prepared resources to engage the pupils and help them to improve their work. Some teaching is outstanding and here pupils make excellent progress because work is so well matched to their individual needs. However, some satisfactory teaching is less successful in engaging pupils' attention because the lessons lack excitement and challenge. The very small amount of silly behaviour is not always managed effectively.

Almost all teachers make very effective use of discussion between pupils to help them learn. They have high expectations of behaviour and manage their classes well. Their involvement of pupils in assessing their own work and the ways in which teachers mark pupils' work mean that the pupils are usually very clear about what they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to lessons. Assessment information is used well to identify pupils with particular needs and strengths.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is carefully planned and regularly evaluated to ensure it remains relevant and exciting for the pupils. The range of additional activities pupils have, through the clubs, links with other schools and the community, residential opportunities and visits, is outstanding. Links with sports and the arts, the school shop, and the citizenship programmes prepare pupils very effectively as contributors to the life of the school itself and the wider community. These opportunities also help all pupils to be enthusiastic learners and develop self-confidence. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils stay healthy, keep safe and become responsible citizens. The school makes good links between subjects and takes every opportunity to develop

skills in literacy and information and communication technology through work in other subjects.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. All requirements for child protection are fully in place and staff are very supportive of pupils who are unhappy or distressed. Pupils agree that they are well supported by the school and comment, 'teachers help us to work out answers to questions so that we learn well'. The very good deployment of Year 6 pupils in the dinner hall ensures that those in the younger classes have someone to help and guide them at this time. The school's arrangements for dealing with any incidents of bullying are effective and pupils are confident that adults will sort out their problems and keep them safe and secure.

There is a clear focus in the school on setting goals for individual pupils to work towards. Most pupils know what these are and understand how much progress they are making. Good support is provided for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a positive start at the school. He has quickly developed a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and has established positive relationships with staff, pupils and parents. He is well supported by the school leadership team. The senior teachers check on the quality of teaching in the school and have a clear view on the progress pupils are making. However, this information is not used as well as it could be to clearly identify what it is in the teaching that needs to improve in order to raise standards. The school has recognised this and the first steps have already been taken to develop this aspect of the work.

The governors know the school well. They are informed about the overall standards achieved in the school. However, the present systems for checking that improvements to the school result in higher academic standards are not rigorous enough. The school regularly consults the parents and pupils about aspects of its work and uses the information to help plan improvements. The overwhelming majority of the parents express confidence in the school.

The headteacher has quickly gained the respect of the school community and is bringing greater rigour to the way the school is evaluating itself. The very good teamwork and the strong staff commitment to the school mean it is well placed to

improve further.

Grade: 2

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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?	2	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

Howley Grange Primary School Howley Grange Road Halesowen West Midlands B62 0HS

25 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Can I start by saying a big thank you to everyone for being so helpful to us when we were visiting your school recently? You told us you think your school is really good and we agree with you.

These are the things we liked about your school

- we think you all behave well and we like the way you are proud of your school
- we think your teachers plan interesting things for you to do in lessons and organise good clubs and trips for you to join in with. Your work in literacy and numeracy is good and everyone is trying very hard to improve your writing
- all the people working at your school really care about you and work very hard to keep you safe and help you get better at your work
- the staff are doing a good job in helping everyone at the school to work together and do as well as they can.

To make your school even better we think the teachers need to do more to help you improve your work so you can all do as well as possible. We have asked them to do more to help the youngest children learn to write. We also think the school governors should ask the staff to let them know more often how well you are all doing in your work, so they can check that everything is fine in the school.

Thank you again for all your help in the inspection. We hope you all continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Andy McDowall HMI Lead inspector