

Hopping Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121927
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314150
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenn Daly
Headteacher	Tammy Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
School address	Pendle Road Duston Northampton NN5 6DT
Telephone number	01604 751625
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is larger-than-average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British origin but the school has a few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school has a Designated Special Provision (DSP) Unit for eight pupils with speech and language difficulties.

Significant building work over the last two years has affected all aspects of school life. Following re-organisation of schools in the area in 2004, the school's intake of pupils has changed considerably and children's attainment on entry is now well below the expected levels. The school has also had considerable staffing changes in the last two years, particularly at senior management level. The current headteacher, the second since the last inspection, started in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with many good features. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their personal development is good. Pupils are very happy at school, form good relationships and trust all the adults who work with them. Pupils show care and kindness to others and take on many responsibilities willingly. They understand well the importance of staying fit and healthy and enjoy the numerous clubs and events the school organises. Parents are very positive about the school and appreciate being part of the 'school family'.

Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below the expected levels. Their personal and social development and communication skills are particularly weak. Good teaching helps children achieve well. At the end of the Foundation Stage, although most are still below average, particularly in their literacy and numeracy skills, a number attain the expected levels. The progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, but is better in some classes than others. In certain classes, teachers make insufficient use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs and challenge all pupils enough. Hence, progress is not as good as it could be. Overall standards are broadly average by the end of each key stage, representing satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points at the time they entered the school. Standards in science are above average because work that is more practical has had a positive impact. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the help they need to achieve well. Pupils in the DSP receive good support and are fully included in all that the school offers. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, teachers challenge pupils well through good discussions and learning is good, but too many lessons are not as demanding, particularly of the more able, who could do more. With a good emphasis on developing the key skills pupils need to learn effectively, and through a very good programme of activities beyond the classroom, the curriculum is good. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise their computer skills regularly. Pastoral care is very good and guidance and support are good, as shown in the way pupils' progress is monitored closely. This information is being used to set pupils challenging targets.

Leadership and management are good. Following a period of considerable change that led to declining standards, the headteacher and senior managers have worked hard and have successfully raised standards. The results in the 2007 tests show good improvement on those of 2006. Governors and senior managers keep a tight check on the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in each class. The school is accurate in its self-assessment, and staff and governors have shown that they have good capacity to improve the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and a well-constructed curriculum that considers individual needs very effectively help children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Because children's personal and social skills are weak, provision here is particularly good. Children settle and adjust to school life very quickly, enjoy learning and have fun. They experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by themselves, and this helps them gain confidence and independence. There are times when the more able children could achieve more through more challenging work. They work and play safely together within a well-ordered environment. The outdoor area is designed well to promote independent learning and frequent visits, for example, to post letters,

help children experience the wider world. Good leadership ensures effective teamwork between teachers and support staff. All adults demonstrate good levels of care, which results in children feeling secure and happy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that all lessons are planned to challenge pupils fully, especially the more able.
- Ensure teachers use the assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' needs more accurately.
- Improve provision for information and communication technology so pupils use computers regularly in their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 had broadly typical knowledge and skills when they started school and are working at average standards now. This represents satisfactory progress and achievement. Despite standards being broadly average in Year 2, pupils' literacy skills are slightly weaker. The school is taking the correct action to address this. Progress from Years 2 to 6 has improved since the previous inspection so that the standards in Year 6 have risen to become broadly average. Standards in English and mathematics are improving as the strategies to develop pupils' literacy and problem-solving skills take effect, but the more able pupils could achieve more. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those in the DSP and the few learning English as an additional language achieve well because of the good additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. They learn about their own and other cultures well but they have a less secure understanding of the contribution made to enrich this country by the diverse communities present in Britain today.

Pupils say they enjoy school and their improved attendance reflects this. 'I like school because we have fun here,' is a typical comment. Pupils behave well and are polite to and respectful of others. They know what is expected of them and respond well, even in lessons that lack challenge. They well understand that keeping fit and healthy is important and have written a 'Healthy Cookbook' to influence others. Many attend the numerous sporting activities offered. Pupils work well with others and are good at taking on responsibilities. They know well how to stay safe and who to go to if they feel threatened. Older pupils help younger ones, giving certificates to those who show how to behave safely on the road. They tidy classrooms and, through membership of the school council and activities such as organising coffee mornings for older residents in the locality, pupils gain a good understanding of their role within the wider community.

Although pupils' good social skills will benefit them in later life, their average basic skills mean readiness for the future is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some is good. The good lessons are lively, work is matched well to pupils' needs and learning is effective. Teachers' presentations are stimulating, with interactive whiteboards used well to present information clearly. For example, in a lively mathematics lesson, the teacher was quick to intervene when she realised some pupils were unsure and needed more guidance. Teachers pose challenging questions to encourage pupils to think about and discuss their work. Teaching assistants help pupils of all abilities participate and learn effectively but occasionally, during whole-class presentations, they are not used to maximum effect. Pupils enjoy working in small groups as sharing ideas helps them to develop their understanding, but not all teachers provide such opportunities. Other lessons, while generally satisfactory, are less demanding and do not require pupils to work hard. Teachers talk for too long and tasks are not matched well enough to challenge pupils fully, particularly the more able. This is because teachers do not use the assessment information they have to guide their planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum links work across subjects well. This helps pupils make better sense of what they are learning and why. For example, pupils enjoy solving problems and hence standards in science have improved. Restricted ICT facilities limit the opportunities pupils have to practise their computer skills. Good individual programmes of work help pupils who need specific support achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils identified as gifted and talented have good opportunities to extend their learning but other more able pupils are not always challenged enough.

The school organises 'Vision days' where parents, pupils, staff and governors all contribute to developing the curriculum pupils needs. Pupils and parents appreciate the many after-school clubs, both academic and sporting, that have been organised at their request. A very good example of this is the 'sculpture garden'. A good programme supports pupils' personal development very well. Many visits and visitors help to make the curriculum more interesting. Such activities give pupils a good insight into the world beyond school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the school's very good care arrangements and how well teachers keep them informed of their children's progress. Children new to the school are welcomed warmly and arrangements to prepare pupils for secondary school are good. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety, welfare and protection are all securely in place. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who have other specific needs receive very good personal support, with external agencies involved where appropriate. The school now has effective systems to check pupils' academic achievement. The data is valuable to support setting individual targets but not all teachers make best use of

this information to challenge pupils fully or identify early when any are falling behind. Teachers mark work regularly and show pupils how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and knows what needs to be done to raise standards. The right action has been taken to monitor pupils' progress and demand better performance of teachers and pupils. Through sustained hard work, standards in the 2007 tests improved on those in 2006. Teachers now have good assessment information to support their planning, and access to good training and support to improve their teaching. Subject leaders review provision and pupils' performance and identify what needs to be done to make improvements. Many parents have attended the very good workshops teachers have organised to help parents understand what they can do to support their children's learning.

Governors visit the school regularly, are well informed and challenge staff by checking that the agreed priorities are having the desired impact. They see the school as a vital part of the local community and work hard to secure its good standing in the area. Despite their best efforts, the headteacher and governors have not yet resolved the situation regarding restricted provision for ICT, which is holding back pupils' progress in this subject.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 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	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?	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.

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	2
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	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you about the many clubs you can join and all that you know about healthy eating. We particularly liked the way the older pupils help to look after younger children and how you help to make your classrooms look neat and tidy.

- Your school is satisfactory and there are many good things too. We particularly liked these things:
- You achieve expected standards and make satisfactory progress. The school's results were better this year than in 2006, so things are improving.
- While most lessons are satisfactory, where teaching is good you really enjoy what you do, work hard and learn more.
- You work best when teachers give you challenging work, but some of you could do harder work.
- The activities teachers plan and all the visitors and trips and clubs are good.
- Your behaviour is good. You know about staying safe, fit and healthy.
- You make good friends and can go to someone if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take very good care of you and help you.
- These are things we have asked the school to do to become even better:
- Make sure all your lessons are good and that teachers give you the work you need to do really well, especially those of you who could do harder work.
- Make sure that teachers check what you can already do so that they plan work that best suits what you need to do to learn more.
- Make sure you use computers regularly so you can practise your ICT skills whenever you have time.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you always do your best and ask for harder work if you need it.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.