

Highnam Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115662
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312017
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Harlow HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	147
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Humble
Headteacher	Carol Parsons
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wetherleigh Drive Highnam Gloucester GL2 8LW
Telephone number	01452 525872
Fax number	01452 507176

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated in detail the following issues: the slight dip in standards in reading and mathematics at the higher levels in Key Stage 1 in 2007, the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) and the way that the school checks its own performance. Evidence was gathered through classroom observations, work sampling, observation of an assembly, play and lunch times, and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Highnam Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none is learning English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is slightly higher than that of typical four-year-olds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is well below the national average and these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Highnam Church of England School is wonderful!' 'The staff are providing a super education.' 'Leadership is excellent.' 'Our children are very happy.' 'We are so lucky.'

These are the views of the parents and they are right! Highnam is an outstanding school where all strive relentlessly to achieve its laudable aim 'to provide each child with a high quality education within a nurturing, caring environment.' And they do so impressively. As a consequence, pupils flourish in this oasis of educational excellence where high standards permeate all aspects of school life.

Standards and achievement across the school are outstanding and have been consistently so for several years. The children get off to a flying start in Reception, where all make excellent progress due to high quality teaching and care. This excellent progress continues across Key Stages 1 and 2, and standards are exceptionally high in relation to the national averages in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave school. Current assessment information of the pupils' progress, which is both rigorous and accurate, coupled with inspection evidence found from looking at a sample of the pupils' work from last term, shows this trend of high standards is set to continue.

Provisional test results for Year 2 in 2008 indicate that attainment at the higher levels in reading and mathematics has improved, thus reversing the slight dip in 2007. The school's robust tracking procedures shows that all the pupils in this year group in 2007 made at least good progress from their starting points. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties achieve very well because of the high quality additional support they receive. They work hard with commendable levels of motivation and enthusiasm. Several pupils reported that 'the extra help allows us do better in the class'. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are highly developed at all stages because the school provides a wealth of opportunities for them to express their ideas.

'There are some talented, dedicated teachers and support staff at Highnam who should be congratulated for their achievements.' This parental view is shared by a significant majority of parents and is a fitting testament to the quality of teaching and learning, which is outstanding. Planning is exemplary, classroom management and organisation are excellent and resources are of a very high quality. When visiting each classroom, it was evident from the pupils' superb behaviour and the infectious buzz of enthusiasm that they are exceptionally motivated. When asked if they enjoyed school, a pupil bubbling with pride said, 'I really, really love learning,' and others joined in spontaneously: 'Definitely, definitely, in this school it is cool to learn!' Without exception, relationships are first class, expectations are high and activities challenge and excite the pupils to learn. As a result, they rise to the high aspirations set with great aplomb and work impressively. In several mathematics lessons, the pupils simply did not want the lessons to end; this was teaching and learning at their very best. The school quite rightly is working hard to involve the pupils more in the assessment of their work and that of their peers.

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development and well-being extremely well, as exemplified by the strong commitment the school places upon the importance of the arts and sports. Pupils know how to keep healthy and appreciate the school's commendable approach to snacks and lunchboxes. Regular physical education lessons, access to a good range of sporting clubs and activities after school and a strong encouragement for pupils to walk and cycle to and from school helps the pupils to keep fit. Excellent use is made of the attractive outdoor environment to encourage activity at break and lunchtimes, and the pupils are quick to include

the children who sit on the 'Buddy Bench' in their play. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of moral, social and global issues, enhanced through poignant, moving assemblies and the imaginative teaching of Christian values during circle time. The pupils talked enthusiastically about why it was important for them to organise fundraising activities to support a Filipino boy through his education. The maturity and genuine concern they exhibited to help those less well off were impressive. Pupils feel safe in school due to the excellent care they receive, and the respect they show to adults and each other is exemplary. The excellent discrete teaching of key skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), coupled with the school's commitment to ensure basic skills are developed through interesting topics, prepares pupils extremely well for their next school and for living in the modern world. Visits to bring learning alive and the regular use of professional artists and sports specialists provide excellent enrichment to the curriculum, as exemplified by the recent acclaimed production of 'Oliver'.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership; nothing but the best will do for the Highnam pupils and the adults who work there. Every child and every adult really matters and their needs drive decision-making, which is always consultative. There is no room for complacency and no stone is left unturned. All members of the school community are valued equally and feel they have a voice. As a result, there is an impressive team spirit and an infectious enthusiasm permeating the school. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and robust. The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to make it even better because of outstanding leadership and management at all levels. Exceptionally good use is made of governors' professional knowledge and expertise to evaluate the work of the school, which they do so assiduously, to hold it to account. The school provides excellent value for money and has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

'My child has just started school; I am very pleased with how things are going.' 'My child is very happy and can't wait to get to school each morning.'

Indeed, at such an early stage in the children's lives at school, these are fitting tributes to the high quality of provision in the Foundation Stage. The children are settling in impressively due to exemplary induction procedures and the outstanding levels of care and welfare they are receiving. Already the children are demonstrating exceptional levels of enjoyment, independence and concentration in all areas of their learning. The poised way in which they walked into a full school assembly and listened impeccably throughout was a joy to observe.

In lessons, the children move around the classroom confidently and calmly, fully aware of the daily routines. They play and work well together and are happy to pursue their own learning interests independently. They are keen to talk and share their learning with visitors whom they do not know; what an achievement in nine part-time sessions! Lessons are vibrant and full of rich, well-resourced opportunities for the children to explore the world around them, yet at the same time develop the important skills in language, number and personal development. Planning is structured carefully to achieve this, and activities in the outside classroom are chosen sensitively to enrich all aspects of their learning. At this early stage in the term, the children were observed writing the letter 'p' accurately, some independently without templates. Several children could confidently link the letter sound to key words, due to excellent teaching of daily phonics. The safe and spacious outdoor provision is used well to facilitate children's play sessions such as the imaginative 'teddy bears' picnic'.

Scrutiny of assessment information for the current Year 1 shows that by the end of the EYFS, the children make excellent progress in all aspects of learning. This is because the outstanding leadership and management of the Reception provision ensures consistently high quality teaching which is tailored to the children's ongoing learning and development needs. All the staff keep a very close check on each child's progress, and assessment is regular and rigorous.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the existing rigorous assessment procedures by involving pupils more in the assessment of their work and that of their peers.

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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	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

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

17 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highnam Church of England Primary School, Gloucester GL2 8LW

I am writing to say thank you very much for giving us such a warm welcome during our recent visit to Highnam Church of England Primary School. We were impressed with the way you greeted us so courteously with lovely, friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work and listening to you sing so beautifully in assembly. What delightful children you are! Your school is outstanding in many ways. Here are some of the special things that it does very well indeed:

- Your school looks after you exceptionally well and the adults want to do their best for you. Consequently, your personal development is excellent.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Everyone in the school cares for each other superbly.
- In Reception, you get off to a flying start in all aspects of your learning; you make excellent progress in all other classes and achieve exceptionally high standards by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you, which help you to enjoy school and develop a love of learning.
- The new school council takes its responsibilities seriously and wants to hear your views in order to make the school even better.
- There are lots of clubs and visits, which you participate in enthusiastically. The ICT club is fantastic! You contribute well to the local community and care for those who are less well off than you.
- You are lucky to have such an inspirational headteacher, wonderful adults and superb governors who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! We have asked them to make sure that you are involved more in the assessment of your own work and that of others.

It was a real privilege to visit Highnam Church of England Primary School. Keep up the excellent work and, most importantly, continue to enjoy your learning. Best wishes for the future; we hope that you achieve great things!

Mrs M. Harlow HMI Lead Inspector



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- ☺ Your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you, which help you to enjoy school and develop a love of learning.
- ☺ The new school council takes its responsibilities seriously and wants to hear your views in order to make the school even better.
- ☺ There are lots of clubs and visits, which you participate in enthusiastically. The ICT club is fantastic! You contribute well to the local community and care for those who are less well off than you.
- ☺ You are lucky to have such an inspirational headteacher, wonderful adults and superb governors who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! We have asked them to make sure that you are involved more in the assessment of your own work and that of others.

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Mrs M. Harlow HMI
Lead Inspector