

Howard Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107671
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	356210
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy Forrest
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed nine teachers and held discussions with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 25 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

- The impact of action taken to raise attainment in English and mathematics.
- If teaching and learning have improved in Years 3 and 4 since the last inspection.
- Whether there is sufficient challenge for pupils who are more able.
- The impact of the school's partnership with the children's centre on pupils' learning and development.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average primary school has gained a number of awards, including the Activemark, and has achieved Healthy School status. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Most pupils are White British. Since the last inspection, pupils and staff have moved to a new building incorporating a children's centre, which is subject to a separate inspection and report. The school is being reorganised to provide for pupils up to the age of 11 over the next two years.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good standard of education. It has some outstanding features. These include the care, guidance and support for pupils, partnership activities with outside agencies and with parents and carers to promote pupils learning and development. Central to the school's success is the drive and vision of the headteacher. This vision is shared by all staff and the governing body and there is a firm commitment to securing further improvement. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because their self-evaluation is accurate. This enables them to target priority areas for development. A good example of this is the way in which they are already planning the changes necessary, particularly in providing an extended curriculum, for the time the school takes in the full primary age range. Leaders promote equality of opportunity in an outstanding way, so that any unevenness between different groups is minimal. The school has successfully consolidated and improved on its good performance at the last inspection. The capacity for further improvement is good.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school from their below-average starting points. As a result, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is broadly as expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Action taken to improve pupils' skills in English has improved their communication and reading skills. In mathematics, pupils' calculation skills have improved and are secure. Nevertheless, pupils are not adept at expressing their ideas in an ordered way in their writing through accurately constructed sentences. Pupils lack expertise in using their mathematical calculation skills to solve real-life number problems. Furthermore, pupils' skills in assessing how well they are doing and deciding the next steps they need to take to improve are at an early stage of development. Leaders are not complacent and are keen to build upon pupils' good achievement. They are committed to making learning more personalised by refining teachers' skills in identifying the specific next steps needed to further individual pupil's development.

Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. The extent to which they feel safe and the way in which they are adopting a healthy lifestyle are outstanding. A wide range of enrichment activities, including well attended extra-curricular clubs, extend the curriculum and add further interest and variety to pupils' learning. Teaching has many strengths and is a key factor in the good progress that pupils make. Liaison with the children's centre makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and development. The effectiveness of safeguarding is outstanding. Care of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and this is much appreciated by parents and carers.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon pupils' good achievement and raise attainment in English and mathematics, by:
 - improving pupils' skills in sequencing their ideas in an ordered way through accurately structured sentences
 - enhancing pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - refining teachers' skills in identifying the specific next steps needed to take pupils' learning forward
 - developing pupils' skills in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve.
- Develop and implement a curriculum to meet the needs of Year 5 pupils from September 2011 and Year 6 pupils from September 2012.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well from their skill levels on entering school, which vary but are generally below those typical for their age. They are keen to learn and take part in activities enthusiastically. They especially enjoy working together on practical activities. This was evident in a joint session for pupils in reception and Year 1, in which they were engaged in a wide range of stimulating tasks, including imaginative role play in the 'hospital'. Pupils have secure reading skills. They enjoy writing, but lack proficiency in ordering their thoughts in correctly structured sentences. Pupils have secure mathematical calculation skills but are not as adept at using these to solve real-life number problems. They are competent in using information and communication technology (ICT) in a variety of contexts, such as using the internet to research information. There is no significant difference between the achievements, nor the learning, of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well-targeted extra support they receive.

Pupils are polite and appreciate the ideas and views of others. Most pupils behave well, though a few with behavioural problems sometimes find it difficult to act responsibly. Pupils say that, when this happens, staff deal with the situation promptly. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or looking after new pupils, and carry out their responsibilities diligently. They contribute well to the wider community by fundraising for charity and performing at a local music festival. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and say they feel very safe and secure in school. They talk knowledgeably about the need to live a healthy lifestyle, understanding the importance of taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Their improving attendance and broadly average literacy and numeracy skills shows they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan activities carefully to ensure that they effectively challenge different ability groups. This shows improvement from the last inspection, when more-able pupils were not always challenged sufficiently. Teaching ensures that pupils are engaged in their work and little time is lost. Relationships are good and give pupils the confidence to suggest answers, even when unsure if they are correct. They know their contributions will be valued. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve through marking and by talking to adults. They are not, however, fully involved in assessing their own progress and how they might improve. Teachers manage classrooms well, so that they are calm and friendly places in which to learn. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is extended by a variety of out-of-school activities, including sports, arts and drama clubs, which are well attended. Visits to places of educational interest, including Scarborough for an ecological study of the beach, and opportunities to work with a variety of visitors, extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. Involvement in

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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the Spen Valley Sports Partnership effectively promotes pupils' physical skills. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle, as reflected in it gaining the Activemark and Healthy School status. The opportunity for older pupils to take part in a residential stay at an activity centre, supports their personal and social development well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effectively tailored to meet their individual needs.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. The school's work with families and a variety of agencies to support pupils' well-being and development is deeply embedded at all levels. Well-targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils, including a nurture group, has helped individuals to overcome significant barriers to their education. This is particularly important, as increasing numbers of children are entering school with poor social skills and with behavioural difficulties. The school has worked successfully over the last year to improve attendance and this is now above average. Outstanding liaison with the children's centre has strengthened the school's work with families and greatly benefited pupils' learning and development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders establish ambition and drive improvement well by focusing on priorities. They motivate staff by communicating high expectations about securing improvement. The school places the equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work. This is evident in the way in which leaders took decisive action after the last inspection to ensure that more-able pupils make the same good progress as their peers. They also improved teaching in Years 3 and 4, so that learning is now consistent throughout the school. The governing body and staff have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues. They receive regular training on safeguarding, in particular child protection. The school's work with other key agencies is exemplary. The governing body know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is fully involved in evaluating its performance and influencing its development. Leaders promote community cohesion well in school and this leads to it being a harmonious community, with pupils from different backgrounds getting on well together. There is good engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school and its immediate community. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with others and often takes a leading role in activities. As a

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result, pupils' learning and development are enhanced, for example in ICT, the arts and sport, in ways that the school could not provide on its own. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers. They are heavily involved in decision making on key matters, as is exemplified in their engagement during the planning of the new school building.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

In nursery and reception, adults work well as a team and provide activities that are interesting, practical and often based on children's own experiences. As a result, children are fully engaged in their work and make good progress. They play happily together, willingly sharing resources and also take turns fairly. They especially enjoy practical activities, such as using printing blocks to design patterns, making collages from various materials or using a computer to create portraits. The good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children, contributes positively to their development as independent learners. An interesting range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum, such as seasonal walks around the local area and a visit to a garden centre. Children's welfare is promoted in an outstanding way and the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good overview of provision that enables priority areas for development to be targeted. These include developing observational assessments so that they are more focussed on identifying the specific next steps for learning. Transition arrangements are being modified to provide a more structured

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skills-based approach to learning when children enter Year 1. The excellent links with the children's centre very effectively prepare children for when they start in the Nursery. Parents and carers say that staff are very approachable and keep them well informed of their child's progress and how they can support learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over 13% of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires, which is below average. The very large majority of these were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'My child has an enthusiastic thirst for knowledge which is fully supported in school' and 'A very friendly, approachable school with committed staff and lots of after-school clubs.' A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that their children were making enough progress or that the school took account of suggestions and concerns. Inspectors judge that pupils make good progress and that the school takes careful account of parents and carers concerns and suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howard Park Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 188 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	48	12	48	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	56	10	40	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	56	10	40	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that:

- you make good progress throughout the school
- the extent to which you feel safe and the way you are adopting a healthy lifestyle are outstanding
- in your questionnaires, you say you enjoy school and that adults are interested in your views
- safeguarding arrangements, in and around school, are outstanding
- the school is a friendly place and relationships between people are good
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- develop your writing skills so you can express your ideas in an ordered way through accurately structured sentences and improve your ability to solve real-life number problems
- identify more closely the next steps to further your learning and improve your skills in assessing for yourselves how well you are doing and how to improve
- put into place a curriculum to meet the needs of Year 5 and 6 pupils, as the school is being reorganised to include these over the next two years.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

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