

The John Hampden School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110293
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337465
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jayne Howarth
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by twelve teachers, and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. The majority of time in school was spent looking at learning. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, school documentation related to the inspection and 88 parents' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective the strategies the school has put into place to raise standards in writing have been.
- How well the quality of teaching and the curriculum has sustained the high standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 which have been evident over several years.
- The impact, if any, of the instability of leadership on the provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This large infant school is situated in a large village and serves the local community. It is located on a campus with the junior school and a secondary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Currently no pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is much smaller than usual. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and the Reception classes. There is a breakfast club, an after-school club and provision for Reception children in the integrated care unit. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Eco-School Award. The assistant headteacher is currently the acting headteacher; the school has been through a period of some instability at senior leadership level and has needed to re-organise leadership due to there being no permanent headteacher for several periods of time in recent 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Staff at The John Hampden School have created a delightful learning environment in which all pupils can thrive and flourish. Senior leaders have provided stability and clear direction during a difficult period affected by instability in staffing. They are enthusiastic and enjoy the support of a committed and dedicated team of teachers who are ambitious and strive for high standards for themselves and for pupils.

Attainment has been significantly above average for several years and the school is proud of its excellent reputation within the local community. Pupils make good progress and their achievement overall is outstanding. All staff provide very high quality care for pupils who feel safe and valued. This is helping them to develop independence and confidence and is reflected in their excellent behaviour and attitudes in and around the school. One parent expressed a typical view in the comment, 'The John Hampden is a happy place and our daughter thoroughly enjoys being there.' Pupils are very considerate towards one another and are eager to help and support each other. They take on roles and responsibilities within school such as taking the register to the office, giving out fruit at break times and acting as 'friendship buddies' in the playground. Class councils enable them to contribute to discussions about what they like in school and what could be better. Pupils look forward to the next steps in education because they have reached high standards in their personal and academic development.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers use imaginative methods to capture their interest. Learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs so pupils make good progress. Pupils appreciate working together, sharing their ideas and cooperating well with one another. For example, in one lesson pupils were asked to consider the character of the wolf in the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' and a debate took place about the character of the wolf and whether or not he was simply misunderstood. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and they are both well supported by highly-skilled teaching assistants. The curriculum is outstanding; it has been developed to provide stimulating experiences, many of which are practical and allow pupils to investigate and explore their immediate environment. It is supported by well-chosen visits to the local community and a range of visitors to share their expertise. For example, personnel from a national oil company visited the school to talk to pupils about the rainforests in Ecuador. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding and consequently these pupils make excellent progress.

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The drive and ambition of senior leaders is a significant factor in the success of the school. They are fully committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community to ensure that all pupils are fully supported in their learning and development. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and has initiated appropriate actions for improvement. Leaders and managers undertake monitoring of the school's work, but the systems require more rigour. There is a well-planned programme of professional development for staff and governors and this is closely linked to school improvement priorities.

Current leaders have shown strength and determination during a difficult time and have continued to drive improvements which have resulted in the sustained high standards and high morale within the staff team and this reflects good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement a more rigorous programme of monitoring so that leaders and managers at all levels maintain a clear understanding of teaching and progress and can take appropriate actions for improvement

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly similar to those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning so that by the time they enter Key Stage 1 their skills are above those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is significantly above average as a result of good teaching and an outstanding curriculum. The school has successfully maintained these high standards for several years. Standards in reading and mathematics are better than those in writing but there is very little variation in the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. The school's strategies to improve the quality of writing have been successful.

Pupils feel safe, secure and valued, thanks to the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, helpful and friendly and have excellent relationships with each other and the adults in school. They enjoy healthy lifestyles because they are learning to make the right choices at mealtimes and they actively take part in the wide range of physical activities available for them. The school achieved the award of Healthy Schools in recognition of the commitment to healthy living. Pupils take part in community events, such as the May Fayre, and they participate in inter-school activities, for example the music festival. They take part in events to raise funds for charities such as the local children's hospice. The Eco-Schools award demonstrates their understanding of the need to take care of their environment. Attendance is good and the school has plans to further improve this. Pupils are very well prepared for their future because their skills in literacy and numeracy are very high. In lessons, they are given opportunities

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to work collaboratively and to discuss and share their ideas. They work confidently with computers showing well-developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use a variety of interesting methods and resources, including ICT, to capture pupils' interest and engage them in learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and they make good progress. Teachers encourage pupils to think and to concentrate by asking challenging questions to develop their understanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and this makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make in lessons because they are confident enough to take risks and try their best. Highly skilled teaching assistants are used very effectively to support those pupils who need additional help and support. Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons but in a small minority of cases they do not always provide pupils with information about what they have done well and what the next steps in learning are when marking work.

The school provides an exciting curriculum which is broad and balanced and very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. It is often built around a topic which links subjects together. Teachers plan together and subject leaders monitor plans to ensure that there is good continuity and progression of skills across all subjects. There are themed weeks such as 'Europe' and 'Health and Safety' when all pupils study the same topic. Very good use is made of the local environment to enhance

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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learning for pupils. They visit the local area to draw and sketch buildings and visitors are welcomed into school to provide additional expertise. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as gardening, singing, French and sporting activities.

The school prides itself on the quality of care provided for pupils and this is reflected in their outstanding personal development. All pupils are well known to staff and excellent support is provided for those pupils who are more vulnerable. The school accesses support from external agencies such as the education psychologist, social care teams and health workers to ensure that those pupils at risk receive the appropriate support. Circle time provides pupils with the opportunity to talk about their concerns and to seek their opinions on how the school could be further improved. The out-of-school clubs at the beginning and the end of the school day provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for pupils.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

It is testament to the strength of the senior leadership team that through a long period of instability, brought about by the absence of a substantive headteacher for several periods of time, the school has continued to drive initiatives to improve the quality of education for pupils and maintain high standards. Pupils' attainment and well-being are at the heart of the school's work and development plans drawn up in consultation with all stakeholders reflect this. The school is aware of the need to establish a systematic programme of monitoring to ensure maintenance of high attainment and further development in provision. Currently, governance is satisfactory rather than good. This is because the governing body has recently undergone significant changes in membership and committees have been restructured. Governors are knowledgeable and recognise the need to create systems where they can support, challenge and monitor the work of the school more robustly. The school actively encourages partnerships, including those with parents, to promote pupils' learning and well-being. Links with the adjacent junior school are developing, with shared activities to improve transition arrangements. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are extremely thorough and very effective. The school prides itself on its commitment to equal opportunities and ensures that any aspects of discrimination are quickly eliminated. There is a good quality action plan in place showing how the school promotes community cohesion and already there are productive links being formed with British schools that have a more diverse population. The school provides excellent value for money.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff have created a safe, attractive and stimulating learning environment in which all children thrive and flourish. Staff use assessment information to plan learning activities so that children make good progress in all aspects of their personal and academic development. There is an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated experiences so that children are able to develop skills of responsibility and independence. Children develop excellent social skills and are able to take turns and to share when using toys and equipment. There is a well-resourced outdoor area in which children can use large apparatus such as bikes and scooters. Leadership has a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Good leadership and management promote strong teamwork, which ensures a consistent approach and this enables children to make good progress. The school provides an informal setting for part-time Reception aged children in the integrated care unit. The unit is well resourced so that they can play and develop in a more relaxed atmosphere. All statutory requirements to ensure children’s health and safety are fully in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Overall parents are very supportive of the school and expressed confidence in the leadership and management team. Most parents were very positive about the excellent start, caring staff and friendly atmosphere in the school. They indicated that communications continue to improve, although a few would like more information about how well their child was doing in lessons. Several parents were concerned about the impact part-time attendance in the Early Years Foundation Stage was having on those children who were born in the summer term. Inspectors looked closely at this but found that younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were making good progress. This issue is something the school is aware of and regularly reviews provision for these children. Currently budget constraints prevent the school from changing this practice.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The John Hampden 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 291 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	63%	27	31%	2	2%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	53	60%	35	40%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	39%	50	57%	2	2%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	39%	43	49%	6	7%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	55	63%	32	36%	0	0%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	43%	44	50%	4	5%	0	0%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	59%	36	41%	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)	31	35%	48	55%	2	2%	0	0%
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	40%	41	47%	4	5%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	32%	50	57%	2	2%	1	1%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	40%	47	53%	0	0%	1	1%
The school is led and managed effectively	32	36%	42	48%	7	8%	1	1%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	56%	37	42%	2	2%	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 all 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupils' 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.



21 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of The John Hampden School, Wendover HP22 6HF

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing what you had to say about your school.

This is a letter to tell you what the inspection team found.

The John Hampden School provides you with an outstanding education. Your standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very high and you all make good progress in your lessons. This is because you are taught well and the adults in your school care for you very well. We were particularly impressed with your behaviour which was excellent in lessons and in the playground. You all feel very safe in school because you all look after each other and you take responsibility for safety seriously. You know how to stay healthy and you enjoy the wide range of activities that are available for you. The youngest children in the school get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Your headteacher and other adults involved in leading and managing the school do a good job by making sure that you all reach high standards. We have asked your school leaders and governors to look more closely at some parts of the school's work to make sure that this very good work continues and that you all make as much progress as you can in your lessons.

We are sure your school will continue to thrive and become even better than it already is and that you will do your best by working hard and helping each other.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Lead inspector

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