

Herringham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114931
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	378963
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2012
Lead inspector	Calvin Pike

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maggie Smith
Headteacher	Viki Reid
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Calvin Pike	Additional inspector
Sarah Beales	Additional inspector
Nicholas Rudman	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons taught by 14 teachers, observed a number of group activities and listened to pupils reading. They also attended two school assemblies, observed breakfast and afterschool clubs and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, and pupils. Inspectors looked at plans and policies, records of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They analysed questionnaires completed by 82 parents and carers together with responses from 108 pupils and 47 members of staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is double the average nationally. Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and there are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is slightly above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two designated Reception classes. The school has both breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body. The school exceeds the government's floor standards for academic performance. It has the Healthy School, International School and Primary Science Quality Mark awards. The school has recently applied for academy status.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Good relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual trust. Pupils, staff and the majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and its work.
- Pupils make more than the expected progress from their low starting points. Attainment in Year 6 is currently in line with national expectations. Pupils develop their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills effectively. Reading skills are less secure but are being enhanced through a systematic approach to support pupils' use and knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics). Although attainment has improved consistently in mathematics, it is below that in English. This is partly because numeracy skills are not fully reinforced in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good across the school with some that is outstanding in Reception, Year 4 and Year 6. There is some variation in the pace of learning as teachers sometimes talk for too long or their lesson interventions are not sufficiently focused to ensure that progress is consistently good, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. A significant minority of responses in questionnaires expressed concerns about the behaviour of a small number of children in the school but pupils are confident that staff deal with incidents effectively. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school. Although attendance has improved and the number of exclusions has decreased, a small proportion of pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Within overall good leadership and management, the headteacher provides excellent direction supported by an effective deputy. Middle managers have become more accountable with responsibilities for the quality of teaching and its impact on raising students' achievement. Governors are supportive, constructively challenging and pay good attention to ensuring the safety of all.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further, especially in mathematics and reading, by:
 - ensuring all pupils, particularly higher attainers, are consistently and fully challenged

- making sure all teachers make more timely interventions in lessons to enable the rapid progress of all pupils
 - embedding opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - extending opportunities for pupils to improve their reading by building further on the expertise developed in teaching phonics in Key Stage 1
- Strengthen the partnerships with parents and carers in order to:
- reduce the persistent absenteeism of a small minority of pupils
 - engage parents and carers further in their children's learning and in reinforcing good behaviour for all pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Building on starting points that are well below age-related expectations, children in Reception achieve well. Most attain the goals expected for their age by the end of the year. They make particularly good progress in their personal and language development. Pupils throughout the school, including those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher than average proportion of pupils make expected progress over Years 3 to 6 bringing attainment to average by the time pupils leave school. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn in class. Older pupils, for example, were able to prepare a balanced argument using connecting words well such as, "If animals ruled the world, it could change for the better". Pupils also enjoyed problem solving. In Year 4, they were excited by a 'beat the teacher' game in which they divided numbers with different remainders.

Pupils who join the school at other than normal transfer times, including those for whom English is an additional language, are helped to settle well and make good progress. Although previous gaps in performance are closing quickly, the progress of higher-attaining pupils is more variable because they are not always fully challenged in lessons. The school is currently applying the systematic approach it has used to develop phonics in Key Stage 1 with older pupils to raise standards in reading and writing. Consequently, pupils' attainment in reading is average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are confident they are supported well to improve and the vast majority of parents and carers agree their children make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers generally have high expectations and effectively encourage pupils to meet them by setting interesting tasks, checking regularly in lessons how well pupils are progressing and intervening when needed to push on the pace of learning. Pupils respond by working cooperatively to complete set tasks and answering questions enthusiastically. For example, in the Reception class the teacher used a puppet with reading glasses to captivate and encourage children to read words with 'th' and 'sh' sounds. Year 6 pupils concentrated hard to calculate missing angles in a triangle. Working cooperatively in pairs, they reinforced previous skills using mathematical

language to explain the methods they used, assess each other's work and how they would apply these calculations in everyday life. These approaches help pupils develop their interest in learning new things and curiosity about the world, as seen when Year 3 pupils designed then made models of the frame for holding the London Eye capsules. The school uses such learning strategies effectively to promote independence, good team working skills and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers plan lessons using information from regular formal assessments and day-to-day observations to ensure that they meet the needs of most pupils well. In less successful lessons, teachers talk for too long or do not use time in lessons to identify how well pupils have understood their learning in order to correct them or raise the challenge further, especially for higher attaining pupils. Individual lesson plans are linked effectively to the school's overall curriculum which is carefully staged to build on pupils' previous learning to ensure good progress. Although initiatives in developing literacy skills across the curriculum have been effective, fewer opportunities are taken to develop pupils' number skills outside mathematics lessons. The good skills of teaching assistants are used well, especially in supporting less able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that teaching is good, helping their children to make good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The good behaviour and safety of pupils are promoted in a range of ways. Pupils have many opportunities to talk about their feelings in lessons, such as in group and class discussions in Year 6 about whether there should be a legal graffiti board available, or as individuals with trained peer mentors and playground buddies. They know which adults to go to if they need help and feel confident that any issues arising in school will be dealt with quickly. The safety of pupils is given high priority. The school's breakfast club promotes good health and well-being and has contributed to improved attendance. Attendance rates are now in line with average but a small proportion of pupils continue to be persistently absent. The school has focused closely on raising pupils' awareness of bullying and racist issues in recent months. The School Council planned and led an Anti-Bullying week and shared with parents and carers the outcomes of the school's involvement in a national survey on these areas.

Pupils behave well in school. While most parents and carers affirmed that this is the case, a significant minority of the small proportion who responded to the questionnaire did not agree. In some cases, those parents and carers with negative impressions of behaviour explained that their children had not experienced disruption to learning in their own classes. Inspection evidence, including discussions with a number of groups of pupils and analysis of records over time, found that pupils are typically polite, eager to please and respect each other, irrespective of backgrounds. Although the school has a small proportion of pupils who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour, its systems, in helping these pupils, are closely focused on improving their learning and achievement and successfully reducing exclusions.

Leadership and management

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives clear direction and drives the school with high ambitions for its pupils. Leaders, staff and governors have high expectations of themselves and of pupils. Self-evaluation is rigorous, regular and accurate, focusing especially on the progress individual pupils make, linked to the quality of teaching provided. The school has incorporated the priorities from the last inspection in its comprehensive planning and is addressing them well. There have been many improvements in the last three years. The role of middle leaders has been developed effectively. Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are effective in enhancing the school's overall quality of provision, including teaching. Consequently, pupils' rates of progress have improved, especially in mathematics. Standards in literacy are being raised as a result of the school's phonics initiative starting in Reception and now being developed in Key Stage 2. Attendance rates have improved. More recently, a greater focus on bullying and racist language has raised pupils' awareness of these issues and determination to eradicate them.

The school's systems to track individual pupil's progress are used well to help ensure that provision matches pupils' needs and that opportunities for learning are equal. Clear measures are in place to ensure all pupils make good progress, including the more able – whose progress was a concern from the school's previous evaluation. Data indicate that current higher attaining pupils are on track to achieve well. The school engages very effectively with other schools, including the local secondary academy, to help to raise the attainment of its pupils. For example, pupils are able to join an after-school mathematics booster class on site, provided by teachers of the local secondary academy. The school is also successful in engaging a range of parents and carers, such as those in a local refuge, to ensure that all pupils achieve well. However, it recognises that more work remains to be done with the small minority of parents and carers of children whose behaviour or attendance could be improved. The school's good curriculum matches the needs of its pupils well. Along with a good balance of provision that includes personal, social and health education within lessons, there is a rich range of extra-curricular classes, clubs, visitors to the school and trips outside. These are reflected in the school's Healthy School, International School and Primary Science Quality Mark awards. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is balanced well to ensure children make good progress. The governing body brings a wide range of outside expertise and skill. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They fulfil their role in supporting improvements and holding the school to account very well. Safeguarding arrangements are robust, ensuring the well-being of all. Considering the strong leadership and management at all levels, the school has good capacity to bring about further improvements.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herringham Primary School, Grays, RM16 4JX

Thank you for helping inspectors to learn more about your school in our recent visit. We appreciated your friendly welcome and enjoyed talking to you about your work and hearing some of you read. We agreed with you that yours is a good school.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You make good progress overall, especially in speaking and listening and in writing and you are improving in reading and mathematics.
- You are keen to succeed and work hard.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps interest you in what you are doing.
- Everyone in the school takes care of you and this makes you feel safe.
- Your headteacher, other staff and the governors work hard to improve the education you receive.

To make things even better, we have asked your school to do these things.

- Make sure all pupils, especially those who find learning easier, make the best progress they can in all lessons by checking more regularly in lessons on how well you are all doing.
- Give you more opportunities to use your number skills in other areas than mathematics and, for older pupils, your reading skills across all subjects.
- Work more closely with parents and carers to increase the attendance of a small minority of pupils and to support all parents and carers in helping their children to learn successfully and behave well.

You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Calvin Pike
Lead inspector

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