

Halsford Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125937
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381154
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2012
Lead inspector	Helen Howard

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	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Faulkes
Headteacher	Lesley Corbett
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	12–13 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Helen Howard

Additional inspector

Tom Donohoe

Additional inspector

Una Stevens

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 15 teachers. They met with pupils and listened to them read. They met with representatives of the governing body and various members of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including its self-evaluation, monitoring procedures and data about pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed the views of 125 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires.

Information about the school

Halsford Park Primary is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who have an ethnic heritage other than White British is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils who have disabilities and those who have special educational needs is much lower than the national average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school has been part of the Grenestede Federation with Baldwins Hill Primary School since 2007. The two schools share the same headteacher and governing body and senior leaders have responsibilities in both schools.

There is a wide range of after-school clubs managed by outside providers. The school has achieved a number of awards including the UNICEF Rights Respecting Recognition of Commitment.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, improvements have been made in a number of areas since the previous inspection, including in mathematics and attendance. The curriculum, which inspires and motivates pupils, offers outstanding opportunities for them to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school is not outstanding because while teaching is mainly good or better, it is not of consistently high quality to result in outstanding achievement for pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is average and improving by the time they leave the school. When they start school they make rapid progress because of high quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, make good progress from then on. Progress in mathematics has accelerated rapidly as a result of the impact of successful focus in recent years.
- Teaching is good and sometimes of high quality. However, the more challenging tasks for higher-ability pupils are not always offered at the appropriate stage in lessons and, consequently, progress is occasionally slower for these pupils. Teachers use assessment well to plan activities and give good feedback during lessons. Marking gives specific comments about how pupils can improve their work, although this is not consistent in all lessons.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school. Their outstanding behaviour enables them to make highly positive contributions to their own learning. The school's values successfully promote excitement for learning, respect, confidence and reflection. Pupils demonstrate these in their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have made sustained improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics, the curriculum and attendance. As a result of effective performance management of

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staff, leaders and managers provide good coaching support and whole-school professional development. Consequently, teaching is improving. Teaching staff are not offered enough opportunities to observe outstanding lessons in order to develop their own practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013 improve teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils' attainment is raised to above average by:
 - ensuring that the planned level of challenge for higher-ability pupils is regularly accessed at the appropriate stage in lessons
 - giving teaching staff the opportunity to observe outstanding lessons in a range of subjects across the federation in order to develop their own practice
 - making more effective use of assessment in marking so that pupils consistently know what they need to do to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils start school with skills and abilities that are below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and reach broadly average attainment in both English and mathematics by the time they leave school. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. Outstanding teaching of early reading skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a very good platform for children to learn to read and this, together with regular support from parents and carers through reading diaries, is developing pupils' evident love of reading. The emphasis on reading continues through Key Stage 1 and 2, where pupils read well and are encouraged to link their own writing skills to texts.

Where there has been a specific focus, progress is accelerating rapidly, for example, in improving mental calculation in mathematics. The introduction of a motivational programme that encourages pupils to beat their own score on a weekly basis is enabling them to calculate at a faster pace.

Almost all parents and carers feel that their child is making good progress in school, as confirmed by inspection findings, and all of the pupils agree that they 'learn a lot'. In the majority of lessons, progress is good and in a minority, it is outstanding. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson exploring facts about animals, pupils used a range of connectives to link sentences, which then formed the basis for them to write paragraphs. In a mathematics lesson, Year 5 pupils applied their knowledge of

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rationing, gained in their study of a polar expedition, as a basis for solving complex divisions and conversions of weights.

Teachers mostly plan appropriate activities for different groups of pupils and teaching assistants support them very well in lessons. Occasionally higher-ability pupils do not progress as fast as they should because work is not sufficiently challenging in the early part of lessons. All groups make similarly good progress, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have disabilities or special educational needs. Pupils whose ethnic heritage is other than White British or who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress because of the focused support they receive.

Quality of teaching

Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their child is taught well, as confirmed by inspection findings, and the vast majority of pupils agree. Good strategies to improve the quality of teaching have been very effective. In particular, teachers appreciate the opportunities provided through the federation to support each other. As a result, they have high expectations and lessons enthuse and motivate pupils.

Effective modelling and good questioning are common features of lessons, enabling pupils to reflect on learning. Pupils construct 'remember to' statements at the beginning of tasks in order to check what they need to achieve and these are then used well by them to assess their work. Pupils are able to work well on their own and they are developing high levels of independent learning skills. The use of 'talking partners' and small group work is very successful in ensuring that all pupils contribute and share their ideas. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on locating hidden shapes by using coordinates, pupils helped each other to correct mistakes so that they achieved well as a group.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, outstanding teaching is securing rapid progress in all areas of children's learning. For example, in an outside phonics session, linking letters and sounds, the teacher planned a range of activities to meet the needs of all children. The variety of tasks, including running to pick a picture that matched the word and making actions to link to sounds, encouraged a sense of fun and, as a result, children quickly recognised words and some could construct sentences.

Data are mostly used well by teachers to match activities to the needs of all pupils and to quickly identify areas of underperformance so that actions can be taken to address it. However, suitably challenging activities are on occasion introduced too late in lessons, to meet fully the needs of higher-ability pupils. In the majority of classes good marking gives pupils specific comments about what they need to do next to improve their work. Marking 'dialogues' encourage pupils to respond to the teacher's comments and opportunities are given to practise the suggestions for improvement. However, marking to show pupils how to improve is not consistently used well in all lessons.

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The wide range of activities in lessons promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely effectively. For example, pupils regularly use paired and group work to reflect on how well they have worked together and respected each other's learning. Improvements in the curriculum have made it exciting and motivating for pupils by providing excellent opportunities for creativity; pupils are able to develop their curiosity about learning by shaping their own learning experiences. Teachers are acutely aware of the diversity within the school and, consequently, pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are able to overcome barriers to learning. Pupils enjoy a wide range of artistic and sporting opportunities and participate in the many clubs offered outside of lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

At the heart of the school's values is the Rights Respecting Schools initiative, and this has led to pupils' very good awareness of the right to learn and to respect others. They are considerate and take responsibility for themselves and each other. For example, 'Buddies' in Year 6 support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by accompanying them to assembly and helping them to learn actions for songs. Pupils use UNICEF articles to draw up classroom charters for behaviour and the school is justifiably proud of its national recognition. Olympic values are skilfully linked to the school's expectations so that pupils understand how their own behaviour demonstrates excellence and respect. Their behaviour in and around school is excellent. Pupils feel very safe in school and are aware of the different types of bullying, although all of the many pupils spoken to said they had not encountered it. There are very few reports of bullying of any type. Pupils are confident that if it did occur, staff would deal with it quickly. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and see this as a priority. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were exploring habitats of creatures. In determining beforehand what they needed to do, they highlighted the need to move safely on the field.

The school supports pupils who have behavioural difficulties well and is successful in engaging them in their learning. Staff go to great lengths to support them and, as a result, exclusions are rare. Records confirm that behaviour over time is outstanding. Attendance is well above average, an improvement since the previous inspection, as a result of the school's very effective strategies. Almost all parents and carers rightly say that there is a good standard of behaviour and safety.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is skilled and committed to driving the school forward. She is very well supported by leaders and managers at all levels and by the cohesive staff team. An ambitious vision is shared by everyone. There have been sustained improvements in progress, attendance and in the curriculum since the previous inspection, demonstrating strong capacity for further improvements. Governors give a good level of support and strategic leadership. They carefully monitor the impact of the school's work in improving progress. Good arrangements for safeguarding ensure that pupils

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feel safe in school. For example, teachers make careful risk assessments for lessons. The Early Years Foundation stage is very well led and managed.

Leaders and managers provide effective role models in driving improvement. Through rigorous performance management, they provide a wide range of support for staff including coaching, individual and whole-school training. As a result, teaching is improving over time and more is outstanding. There are not enough opportunities yet for staff to observe outstanding practice in a range of subjects across the federation in order to develop their own teaching to the same high standard.

The curriculum is outstanding because it offers a broad range of themed activities that are determined by pupils. This leads to a high level of engagement in learning and a sense of fun in lessons. As one Year 5 pupil said at the end of a mathematics lesson, 'I really like our school because we do cool things. It's never boring and always fun.' The travelling zoo for example, kept children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enthralled. There are many varied opportunities through the curriculum and in assemblies to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, the school provides rich and memorable experiences for pupils that prepare them well for their next steps in learning.

The school ensures that all pupils have the same opportunities and there is no discrimination. Progress of groups of pupils is carefully tracked and all groups make at least good progress overall.

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.



14 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halsford Park School, East Grinstead RH19 1LR

You may remember that three inspectors came to visit your school recently. Thank you for such a lovely welcome. We could see how much you enjoy coming to school. Halsford Park is a good school that is helping you to do well. The headteacher and other leaders and managers have made lots of improvements so that you can make better progress.

You told us that you learn a lot in lessons and that teaching is good. We agree and we could see that you especially enjoy the 'creative experiences' lessons where you choose together what you want to learn about.

You told us that behaviour is good in school. We thought it was outstanding in lessons and at play times. We saw that you work really hard and try your best. We particularly liked the classroom charters that you have written to help you remember how to respect each other and make sure that everyone has the right to learn.

We have asked the school to do these things to make it even better:

- Some of you make better progress when you have higher levels of challenge and we have asked teachers to make sure that you get these earlier in lessons. We have also asked teachers to share their best ideas for making lessons really interesting so that you make the best progress you can.
- We have asked teachers to ensure that when they mark work, you always know what you have to do to improve it.

You can help by continuing to do the best you can.

We wish you well for the future

Yours sincerely
Helen Howard
Lead inspector

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