

Hitherfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131824
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	360329
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Hooberman
Headteacher	Chris Ashley-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
School address	Hitherfield Road London SW16 2JQ
Telephone number	020 87698428
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Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The team observed 17 teachers teaching 20 lessons. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' academic progress and attendance. They also looked at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping pupils safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 156 parents and carers.

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

- To what extent do different groups of pupils, such as girls and pupils who do not speak English as an additional language, make similar progress?
- To what extent is the quality of teaching and learning consistent across all classes?
- Why do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities appear to make better progress than other pupils?
- How effectively do all leaders, including members of the governing body, contribute to school improvement?

Information about the school

Hitherfield Primary is larger than most primary schools. A very large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mostly Black African and Black Caribbean. More pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. Nearly half the pupils speak English as an additional language, with a small minority at an early stage of English language acquisition.

◆ The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most primary schools. The predominant needs are moderate learning difficulties, behavioural needs and speech and language difficulties.

◆ The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. Most children attend Nursery part time, either in the morning or afternoon, and a few stay for the full day.

◆ The governing body runs a breakfast club and an after-school club. The attached children's centre is being inspected on a separate occasion. The school holds the Artsmark Gold award and Advanced Healthy School status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Hitherfield Primary is a satisfactory school where everyone is guaranteed a very warm welcome. One parent summed up the school by saying, 'Hitherfield is a very happy school' and another exclaimed, 'The sense of family and community is exceptional!' Parents and carers are delighted with the high levels of care for their children and turn up in great numbers to support events and find out more about their children's learning. Pupils arrive at school with a lively step, looking forward to meeting their teachers and catching up with their friends. Pupils from many different cultures, faiths and backgrounds get on very well together. Behaviour is good, because pupils know the clear expectations and boundaries. The few who sometimes find it difficult to behave appropriately are given very good support to bring them back on 'the straight and narrow'.

◆ Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. In 2009 pupils left at the end of Year 6 with attainment below national averages, particularly in mathematics. The school's data for 2010 show an improvement in mathematics. Pupils' current attainment is broadly average. However, attainment in writing remains a relative weakness. Overall, girls make similar progress to boys. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the caring attention and expert support provided. Pupils who arrive speaking very little English make great strides in their language acquisition and are soon achieving as well as their peers. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but inconsistent. The good practice of several teachers is not being used effectively enough to develop and bolster the quality in other classes. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who feel at ease in their learning. However, pupils are sometimes not sufficiently engaged because teachers do not always explain the aims of the lesson. Marking is regular and starting to follow a consistent pattern between classes, but some teachers fail to stretch learning further by setting additional tasks and checking they are followed up by the pupils. Pupils are proud when given the chance to show off their good work. Nevertheless, pupils are not all sufficiently confident in evaluating the quality of their own or each other's work, or knowing what they need to do to improve it.

◆ The headteacher is justifiably held in high esteem by the school community. One parent commented, 'The headteacher is fantastic, very hands on, approachable and responds quickly to issues raised.' The governing body is supportive and well organised. Senior staff work well as a team to ensure each and every pupil feels 'at home' at school. Most regularly observe lessons, but monitoring tends to concentrate on the mechanics of teaching rather than checking that pupils are learning effectively. They have ensured that the curriculum is interesting and reflects the different interests and backgrounds of the pupils, but not that activities are well matched to the individual needs of pupils in order to improve achievement. Beyond literacy lessons, pupils are not always given sufficient scope to write at length. The headteacher and his senior team are clear about what needs to get

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better and have set a challenging target of 2012 for significant improvement. They have been successful in raising attainment in mathematics, indicating that the school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring pupils have sufficient opportunity to write at length in lessons beyond literacy.
- Improve the quality of learning so by July 2011 the majority of lessons are good or better by:
 - ensuring pupils are clear about the skills they need to acquire or improve by the end of lessons
 - ensuring that marking consistently encourages pupils to extend their learning
 - encouraging pupils to improve their evaluation of their own and their classmates' work.
- Ensure all leaders and managers rigorously contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - sharing best practice from within and beyond the school to improve consistency
 - ensuring that teachers accurately match work and activities to the differing needs and abilities of individual pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the lessons observed during the inspection pupils were typically making satisfactory progress. Standards seen in lessons and in pupils' books were broadly average, although pupils' writing still lags behind reading and mathematics because insufficient emphasis has been placed on practising and consolidating writing skills across different subjects. The rate of overall progress fluctuates from class to class depending on the quality of teaching and learning, with less progress made in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Pupils who speak English as their first language achieve equally satisfactorily to those who speak English as an additional language.

◆ Pupils appreciate the warm, caring ethos of the school. They feel safe and know how to look after themselves in school and, as they get older, on the way home. Behaviour is good, particularly in assemblies and when moving from class to class, although a few boys can become over-boisterous at playtimes and are not always aware that their actions can be intimidating for younger pupils. Pupils take plenty of exercise, eat sensibly and many walk to school. They have a strong sense of community, proudly taking on responsibilities around the school such as recycling and fund raising. School councillors can point to positive differences they have made to school life and are looking forward to taking a bigger lead in running their own meetings. Pupils have a good knowledge of the local community. Many were thrilled to recognise the local Streatham war memorial from a photograph in the Remembrance assembly. Pupils reflected sensibly and quietly on the terrible impact of war. Together with their good knowledge of other cultures and faiths, the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils'

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average attendance, mature outlook and improving skills in literacy and numeracy mean they are satisfactorily prepared to move on to secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Good care, guidance and support start from the moment pupils begin at the school. Settling-in arrangements are very effective, with special support given to those pupils who are not fluent in English. The school works very well with parents and carers to ensure any problems are ironed out quickly so school and home can work together effectively for the pupils' well-being. One commented, 'My children are so comfortable at this school. They have a voice and are listened to.' Vulnerable pupils are especially well cared for because the school not only maintains strong partnerships with outside agencies, but also builds up its own expertise. The school is starting to find ways to ensure that gifted pupils have sufficient opportunities to shine in their talents. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide excellent care and interesting resources that are well linked to learning.

◆ Teachers establish good relationships with pupils to ensure they are happy and settled in their learning, but this sometimes detracts from a sense of urgency and pace. Lessons are well organised and the interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively to bring interest to learning. In a good English lesson, pupils concentrated attentively on the video clips of a Jamaican story so they could take notes for their own writing. However, on occasion

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teachers do not make clear to pupils why they are doing a particular activity or check that every pupil understands what to do; as a result, learning loses momentum. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to give opinions on how they could learn better and to mark each other's work, but this is not consistent practice in all classes. Many teachers follow agreed marking routines with morale boosting comments but do not all set further challenges to encourage pupils to stretch their learning.

◆ The curriculum is enlivened with interesting trips, links to different cultures and plenty of art. Year 2 pupils talked with animation about their trip to London Zoo and the animals they learnt about. However, stimulating themes are not always used to their best effect to improve writing skills, particularly when activities are either not sufficiently demanding for the most able pupils or difficult to understand for the least able.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2


How effective are leadership and management?

The happiness and well-being of the pupils are of paramount importance to the headteacher and the senior leadership team, and they work effectively to meet this ambition. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and the development plan clearly identifies the need to raise attainment and achievement. Senior leaders regularly evaluate teachers' plans to ensure required skills are being taught. The frequency of lesson monitoring is improving, but senior leaders are not all confident in identifying why learning is not as good as it should be. The good and sometimes excellent teaching practice of some staff is not being exploited sufficiently to help increase quality elsewhere. The school maintains satisfactory external partnerships to promote learning and well-being. Links to support vulnerable and less-able pupils are strong, but the school is not working effectively enough with local leading practitioners to improve the quality of teaching. ◆

◆ The governing body is very knowledgeable about the context of the school and plays an important part in the extensive building and refurbishment programme. It knows what needs to improve but is only just getting to grips with questioning why achievement is not better. It ensures that safeguarding procedures are good because of regular risk assessments and swift reaction to any parental concerns. Pupils have equal opportunities to make satisfactory progress in their learning and all pupils, whatever their ability or background, have the chance to participate in activities in and out of school. The close attention paid to celebrating the wealth of cultures, faiths and social backgrounds represented in the school results in a very supportive family atmosphere. Pupils, parents

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and carers, staff and governors, whether Moslem or not, thoroughly enjoyed the recent Eid party. The school goes out of its way to include parents and carers in their children's learning, right from home visits in Reception to very effective help as their children transfer to secondary school. Parents and carers who might have had negative experiences of school themselves have a much more positive view of education now  and this rubs off well on their children. The school maintains good relationships with the local Streatham community, has established early links with a school in Uganda and is looking to strengthen ties with a partner school in another part of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in very quickly, positively helped by comprehensive home visits that build up the staff's useful knowledge of each child's needs. They soon get used to the routines of school life and move about the classrooms and outside areas with confidence. Independence and self-reliance are successfully encouraged. Children behave well and build up good personal and social skills as they mix with new friends and share in games. They arrive with skills that are often well below those levels expected for their age. By the time they leave Reception, they have made good progress in all early learning areas.

The key person attached to each child keeps meticulous notes on how their charges are progressing. Consequently staff are quick to plan activities that match each individual child's needs. An excellent storytelling session held children of all abilities in rapt attention when they pretended to be hunting for a bear. For the most part, staff lead learning along at a good pace, but sometimes children's attention lapses when too long is spent in one session. Plenty of good quality conversation extends children's vocabulary and stretches their imagination, which is especially important for children who do not speak English at home. At times questions are too closed, expecting only a one-word answer. Children's

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work is collected, annotated and used as a 'learning journey' record which is shared with parents and carers. They particularly appreciate the 'bubble' dialogue when staff, families and children can add comments on pieces of work. Good leadership and management ensure provision is of a good quality and that links with the children's centre are seamless and productive.

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

A very large majority of parents and carers are extremely pleased with all that the school does for them and their children. Many added comments praising the family atmosphere and the care and support provided. The individual concerns raised were followed up with the school but followed no particular pattern, and parents and carers are confident that the headteacher and his staff will sort them out successfully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hitherfield Primary 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 156 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 467 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	115	74	39	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	64	52	33	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	83	53	64	41	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	53	59	38	11	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	88	56	62	40	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	76	49	75	48	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	58	57	37	5	3	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)	73	47	58	37	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	48	66	42	11	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	52	57	37	8	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	78	50	64	41	6	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	101	65	51	33	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	70	46	29	1	1	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

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 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.



10 November 2010

◆ Dear Pupils

◆ Inspection of Hitherfield Primary School, Streatham SW16 2JQ

◆ Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and telling us your views. We particularly like the way you behave well, know how to keep yourselves safe and lead healthy, active lives. You all get on very well together, whatever your religion or background. Your parents and carers are very pleased with how well you are looked after and we agree.

◆ You make satisfactory progress in your learning and your attainment is broadly

◆ average in English and in mathematics. We have asked your teachers to help you to improve your writing in particular. Teaching is satisfactory. All teachers are very welcoming but you learn better in some classes than others. Your headteacher and the team of senior teachers lead the school satisfactorily and they know what needs improving.

◆ We have judged your school to be satisfactory, which means that it does some things well but some other things need to be improved. To make your education better, I have asked your school to do the following:

- Help you to reach higher standards in writing by giving you more chances to write in lessons beyond just literacy
- Make sure that teaching is at least good in all lessons through teachers checking you are clear about what you need to learn, telling you how to improve your work in marking, and routinely encouraging you to see what you can do better in your work
- Make sure your senior teachers routinely go into lessons to check how you are learning and that you all have work that is not too hard, not too easy but just right.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that all the staff make your school a very special place for you. You can do your bit by continuing to try your hardest in your learning and maintaining the lovely community feel at Hitherfield Primary School.

◆ Yours sincerely

◆ Sarah McDermott Lead inspector

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