

Heathlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133268
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	360464
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Borrill
Headteacher	Caron Wagstaff
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13

- lessons and saw eight teachers and three teaching assistants teach. They also met with parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment data and safeguarding policies. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 113 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- How well pupils progress, particularly in writing, and especially boys and more able pupils.
- How well the school uses information from assessment and tracking of pupils' progress to move their learning forward.
- Whether leaders and managers are taking the right steps to improve teaching and learning so that pupils can make better progress.
- The reasons why attendance fluctuates so much from year to year and what the school is doing to improve it.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit which caters for part-time Nursery and full-time Reception children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special education needs and/or disabilities is below average, although this varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also below average. Privately run breakfast and after school clubs and a pre-school group operate on the school site and are inspected separately.

Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable disruption in staffing due to illness and maternity leaves. Four out of the five classes in Years 1 to 6 have job share arrangements, and, although pupils in Years 3 to 6 are in mixed-age classes, they are split into single year groups each morning for literacy and numeracy. The present headteacher took up her post in November 2009. The school had an acting headteacher from January to November 2009.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Children learn and develop well in Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, evidence from lessons, assessment data and pupils' books show that progress, although leading to satisfactory achievement by Year 6, varies between year groups and within classes. A key factor in these variations is the variation in the quality of teaching across and within classes. While overall satisfactory, teaching leaves pupils with too few opportunities to think and learn for themselves and it is not always matched well enough to their different learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in their learning. More able pupils do not always do as well as they could because the work they are given is not always demanding enough. Nevertheless, early indications from the assessments completed at the end of last academic year are that attainment, although remaining broadly average, is better than that of the previous year.

The limited amount of writing available at this time of year, together with a small amount from last year, shows pupils heed basic grammar and spelling rules when drafting and editing their work. In mathematics, pupils' good calculation skills are not developed further because there is an overreliance on completing exercises. Opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills, including in different subjects, for example, by writing at length more often, or by solving real life mathematical problems. The curriculum, though satisfactory, does not provide teachers with enough guidance in these matters.

The satisfactory care, guidance and support given to pupils contribute to their good behaviour and to their enjoyment of school. Pupils feel safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They praise adults because they are 'kind, and interested in our views', and they 'explain how to improve your work'. The helpful marking in pupils' books confirms this but other aspects of assessment are not as strong. Senior leaders have pinpointed some inaccuracies in assessment that have caused problems when tracking pupils' progress. New assessment systems are in place to eliminate the problems and are being followed up with training for all staff. However, records of training show that the large amount of job-sharing in the school means that not all staff attend all sessions. This limits the effectiveness of training and contributes to the inconsistencies in teaching and learning seen across the school.

While leadership and management are satisfactory overall, the headteacher's leadership is good. It is giving the school a very clear sense of purpose and direction, by systematically tackling what needs to be done to raise standards and achievement. Governors, senior and subject leaders are supporting her well in the drive to improve teaching and learning, and make staff more accountable for how well their pupils are doing. Much of this work is still at a relatively early stage, but the green shoots of improvement are beginning to show

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in, for example, the improving outcomes in 2010. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its priorities are well founded. Taken together, all of this means the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - in writing, giving pupils more opportunities to write at length
 - in mathematics, giving pupils more opportunities to use their calculation and other skills to solve real life mathematical problems
 - building opportunities into different subjects for pupils to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills
 - Eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment and raise them to good by:
 - ensuring assessments are accurate and that all staff use the information to plan work that closely matches pupils' different levels of ability
 - encouraging pupils, especially the more able, to become more independent in their learning
 - reviewing the job-share situation to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous throughout the school and that all staff know and follow agreed systems and procedures.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start school with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment is average by the time they start Year 1. After this, the school's data, lesson observations and pupils' work show that progress varies from inadequate to excellent. By Year 6, pupils' writing is average, and except for some examples of poorer presentation and handwriting in work produced by boys, there is no significant difference between the attainment or progress of boys and girls. Pupils rarely use their writing skills in other subjects except, for example, to label diagrams or make notes, because they are not encouraged to do so. This limits progress in writing, particularly for more able pupils, because they do not have the opportunity to undertake research or to write freely to show what they know. When writing does have a clear focus, pupils become very engaged in it as, for example, when Year 6 pupils were writing letters to the Prime Minister to ask him to do something about animal cruelty, after reading and discussing the images created by a poem about a performing bear. In mathematics' lessons, pupils work through a range of calculation exercises but they are not always clear about the methods they use or how to apply their developing expertise to solve problems, especially real-life problems.

Pupils are happy and settled and they enjoy school. They state confidently that they can turn to any adult for help and they will get it immediately. They have a good

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understanding of right and wrong, and know that there are different ways to settle disputes. They behave well in lessons, even when teaching is less than successful, and also around the school. They have a good understanding of why it is important to live and eat healthily, take regular exercise, and avoid the dangers posed by drug and alcohol misuse. Like most schools, pupils raise money for a range of charities and gain an awareness of the needs of others. They work equally well together or on their own in lessons and relish the few opportunities they have to show initiative and take responsibility, for example, as 'buddies' to other pupils, and as school councillors. Their understanding of different faiths, ethnicities and cultures is satisfactory as is their attendance, although parents and carers taking their children on holiday in term time continues to be an issue for the school. This and their sound basic skills mean they leave the school adequately prepared for the future.

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	3
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	3
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	3

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?

Pupils report that teaching is 'sometimes fun', and they are right. Teaching ranges from outstanding to inadequate, but mostly it is satisfactory. In the best lessons, activities follow up previous learning and ensure pupils make good progress. For example, the imaginative use of a practical activity helped pupils in Year 1 to remember how to use capital letters and full stops when they came to write well constructed sentences to describe what they had done. In such lessons, good planning and classroom organisation

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ensure pupils understand what they have to do, and they then do it well. In other lessons, teaching is often mundane and work is too closely directed, thereby limiting independent learning. Pupils are also kept together as a whole class for too long and less time to work on tasks that are matched to their needs.

Teachers' marking provides pupils with useful guidance on how to improve. However, there were few instances of learning being adjusted in lessons to build on what pupils showed they were capable of doing. Expectations are sometimes too low and pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently pushed to do as well as they can. The marked differences in how different teachers and teaching assistants promote learning, whether taking a group or teaching the whole class, contribute to the variation in pupils' progress.

The curriculum is planned sufficiently to ensure all subjects are taught, and pupils' safety, health and well-being are given due attention. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities contributes to this. Links between subjects are beginning to develop as part of the move towards a more creative curriculum. However, they are not yet secure enough to ensure that there is adequate and systematic development of literacy and numeracy skills within different subjects and topics. As part of the satisfactory care, guidance and support provided for pupils, the school monitors attendance and pursues all absences. It has recently tightened up procedures for authorising holidays during term time, although the impact of this is not yet evident. The support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is conscientious, persistent and enhanced by support from outside agencies. Good links with the local high school ensure pupils are well prepared for moving there, and transition from Reception to Year 1 is good. Transition between other year groups is underdeveloped.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is encouraging staff to develop the drive and ambition to raise achievement and establish a common sense of purpose. Under her guidance, for example, key staff are developing satisfactorily into their middle management roles. The headteacher's monitoring and evaluation present an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Mechanisms for ensuring continuity in planning and assessment in the face of so many job shares are underdeveloped. This affects the quality of teamwork across the school and consequently pupils' learning. The headteacher and governing body recognise this and have rightly prioritised the need to tackle it. The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily. It supports the school well but is less effective

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in holding it to account for the outcomes achieved. Governors are undergoing training to help address this.

The school has set itself challenging targets. The new systems for assessing pupils' learning have the potential to become a powerful tool in checking progress towards these targets and to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. They ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being, but systems for checking their effectiveness are underdeveloped. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, for example, ensuring that all pupils can take part in everything it has to offer. Nevertheless, the progress of different groups of pupils remains uneven because the quality of teaching is not consistent. The school fosters in pupils a sound understanding of the need to respect different faiths, ethnicities and cultures at home and abroad. The detailed audit, and the inclusion of community cohesion in the school improvement plan, underpins the school's determination to improve its currently satisfactory provision in this area.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children play and learn to work in a safe, secure environment where their health, welfare and well-being are given high priority. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional skills prepares them well for learning. It enables them to settle quickly into school routines and to make good progress in early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Staff make good use of the well equipped areas in and out of doors to do this, and there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children select for themselves. This ensures good levels of challenge alongside the development of good independent skills. Children behave well. Reception children demonstrate good ability to

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share, take turns, listen to adults and follow instructions and, even at this early stage of the year, Nursery children are beginning to follow their example.

The leadership and management have a very clear overview of provision and progress in this age group, and a good understanding of how young children learn. Staff keep detailed records of children's progress, which are backed up with photographic evidence of achievements. They use these well to plan what each child should do next. This, along with the regular monitoring of teaching and learning, ensures continuity of progress. Support staff are deployed effectively and trained well for their roles. However, variations in the quality of teaching, though less marked than in the rest of the school, mean that opportunities are sometimes missed to move children's learning on by building on what they already know, understand and can do.

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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. They say children are 'safe and happy' there, although not always pushed to 'achieve their maximum potential'. These views are accurate. However, the inspection judged several areas satisfactory that parents and carers deemed to be good, for example, progress, teaching and learning, leadership and management, and how well pupils are prepared for the future. The headteacher has taken important steps towards improving all of these things, but it is too early to measure fully the impact the initiatives are having on pupils' progress and attainment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heathlands 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 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	69	34	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	80	23	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	58	45	40	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	55	49	43	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	72	64	41	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	61	42	37	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	64	40	35	1	1	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)	64	57	46	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	61	44	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	61	39	35	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	50	49	43	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	56	50	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	69	35	31	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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.



Thursday 23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heathlands Primary School, Rainworth, NG21 0DJ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking to us about your work. We were pleased to find that you enjoy school, that you feel safe there and are confident that adults will always help you. You showed us you have a good understanding of why it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. You behave well in lessons and around the school and we found that when you have the opportunity to take responsibility, you thoroughly enjoy doing so. It is clear that you enjoy being 'buddies' to other pupils and that your new school councillors are very keen to get on with their jobs. You reach average standards in Year 6 and successfully learn how to work as part of a team or on your own. These skills ensure you are adequately prepared for the future.

At this point in time your school is satisfactory, but your headteacher is working very hard to improve it so that you can make better progress. You are right when you say she is doing a good job. You can help her by trying your best never to miss a day so that you do not miss any learning, by working hard and by doing everything you can to help yourselves do better. The inspection team looked closely at how they could help the school to improve before its next inspection and recommends that it:

- helps you make faster progress in writing and mathematics by giving you more opportunities to do longer pieces of writing, solve more real-life problems in mathematics and use these skills in different subjects.
- ensures that whoever is teaching you teaches you well and assesses your work correctly by following the procedures that those who lead and manage the school have agreed with them.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning in the future as much as you do now and we wish you well. Thank you once again for giving us your views.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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