

# Heronshaw School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130953
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	360172
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rob Crompton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darryl Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Kirtley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lichfield Down Walnut Tree Milton Keynes MK7 7PG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Observations included 20 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, the members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors looked at minutes of meetings held by the governing body, curriculum plans, assessment documents and a wide range of other information. The questionnaires returned by 76 parents and carers, and 10 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress and attainment of current pupils to see whether the recent levels of achievement are on course to be sustained.
- The outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to discover the accuracy of the school's judgement that overall effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. The outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to discover the accuracy of the school's judgement that overall effectiveness of the setting is outstanding.

## Information about the school

Heronshaw is a smaller than the average infant school. It has two classes for each year group. About three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is about the national average. Just under a fifth of all pupils speak English as an additional language, 11 of whom are at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school has the Activemark and Healthy School status. The school runs a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This good school provides a warm and purposeful environment for learning. Pupils hasten into school eager to learn because teachers make every effort to engage them in activities they enjoy. They behave well and develop skills that ensure they are well prepared for the challenges and opportunities in their future education and beyond. Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding, and the school's excellent partnerships with outside agencies contribute significantly to its provision. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the outstanding way in which the school cares, supports and guides their children. Typical of their comments was, 'I will be honestly devastated for my child to leave Heronshaw School in July. I have only praise for the staff and headteacher in a wonderful, caring and enthusiastic team. They are outstanding'.

All groups achieve well, including those who find learning more difficult, the more able and those with English as an additional language. Pupils make good progress through the school and levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. The sense of security and belonging that is engendered by all staff contributes to pupils' thoughtful support of one another and their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Well-established assessment strategies contribute to the effective teaching. Pupils are increasingly involved in reflecting on their own work and thinking about how they could improve. Almost all work is pitched at the right level but occasionally some more-able pupils find tasks very easy. Conversely, some less confident pupils find ideas, such as the analysis of poetry, difficult to comprehend. Pupils benefit from very good support from teaching assistants, particularly as they take small groups who need extra help or additional challenge. Assistants do not play as full a role as they might, however, during lessons introductions and summaries.

The governing body performs its role well in challenging the school and holding it to account. Self-evaluation procedures are well established and accurate, and involve all stakeholders, although assessment documents lack a succinct overview. This means it is not easy for leaders to spot apparent anomalies in assessment data, such as the current discrepancy between the attainment at the end of Reception being judged as above average and the attainment of the same pupils as they start Year 1 being described as average. That said, strategic planning is good overall, as seen in the school's success in sustaining good levels of achievement over recent years. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school's track record, together with current strengths in leadership and management, indicate a good capacity to improve further.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen further the use of assessment information so that work is more consistently pitched at the right level for different groups by:
  - providing more challenging work for more-able pupils from the outset of lessons
  - responding quickly and providing more appropriate work when pupils find tasks too difficult.
- Deploy the skilled teaching assistants so that they are most effectively engaged throughout lessons.
- Develop further opportunities for staff in Reception and Year 1 to analyse and compare assessment information to provide an accurate picture of pupils' progress from the beginning of Reception to the end of the first term in Year 1.
- Simplify the presentation of assessment information to provide a succinct overview of pupils' progress through the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When they start school in Reception, children's knowledge, understanding and skills are below those typical for their age. They enjoy learning and achieve well, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. A strong focus on teaching letter sounds means pupils' confidence in reading new words and building up their own vocabulary grows quickly. In turn, this provides a secure foundation for developing their writing skills. From the start, teachers emphasise the importance of developing confidence in writing for different purposes, such as a description, narrative or poem, and this is evident in pupils' written work. In one lesson, a pupil in Year 1, for example, included adjectives when writing, 'Father Christmas has a big fat tummy like a bowl of jelly.' Pupils' learning moves on apace so that, by Year 2, most write well independently using correct punctuation. In another lesson, one pupil wrote, for example, 'Suddenly, she stopped and looked up and saw a big green dinosaur. "What are you doing here?" said Little Yellow Hoody, nervously.'

A systematic approach to building on pupils' early counting skills means pupils make good progress in calculating. They gain a good understanding of using different kinds of graphs, such as bar charts and pie-diagrams, to present information. More able pupils showed good levels of understanding as they added amounts of money. When adding £1.50 and £1.63, one explained, 'I started with £2.50 then counted on in tens.' Pupils who find learning more difficult also make good progress in literacy and numeracy because they receive well-targeted support. Similarly, those with English as an additional language grow in confidence, not least because staff engage them in conversation at every opportunity.

Pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning are positive factors in their successful learning. Pupils value opportunities to contribute to their school, such as by being members of the school council and taking on the role of play leaders. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and said they always had an adult to turn to if needed. They chatted extremely confidently about healthy foods and showed an excellent knowledge of what foods are better to avoid. Pupils' understanding of the importance of exercise is clear from the school's Healthy School status which acknowledges their eager participation in physical activities. Pupils support one another

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and celebrate their classmates' achievements. During class discussions pupils showed a very secure understanding of fairness and justice and the value of these principles in everyday life. Pupils are keen to attend school but the average attendance figures are due, mainly, to the proportion of early childhood ailments.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The positive and caring ethos of the school is built on a foundation of trust and respect for oneself and others, and this culture is embedded at all levels. Adults know pupils very well. Pupils needing support are identified early and, through excellent partnerships with parents and outside agencies, staff ensure that they do as well as they can in a supportive and caring environment. The highly positive views of parents and carers were summed up by a parent who wrote, 'Heronshaw has been a wonderful start for my children on their journey through education. A wonderful team of people who are approachable, caring, nurturing and completely child focused. A headmaster who greets children and parents every morning, interested in all.'

Effective teaching is underpinned by the excellent relationships teachers forge with pupils. Teachers are highly skilled in captivating pupils' interest through activities that engage them. Their insights into what works best generate a real enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is another key factor in pupils' enjoyment of school and their achievements. It is based firmly on developing basic skills, with a strong emphasis on practical activities.

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During their study of castles, pupils in Year 1 were absorbed as the teacher used the interactive whiteboard and models adeptly to illustrate key features. As they designed their own models, pupils referred to labelled pictures, and used words such as 'portcullis', 'moat' and 'drawbridge' accurately in their designs. While investigating push and pull forces, pupils in another Year 1 class thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with bows and arrows, catapults and toy trains. ♦

Practical tasks not only support pupils' academic work but also their personal development. In Year 2, for example, pupils created shields to illustrate their personal characteristics and interests. These were displayed alongside photographs of their families. Such activities, together with 'circle time' discussions successfully promote pupils' self-esteem, their sense of responsibility towards one another, and make a significant contribution to the harmonious school community. Pupils gain an understanding of the wider world through studying explorers and learning about hot and cold countries, designing vehicles for different terrains and by creating their own imaginary islands.

Pupils benefit from good feedback through detailed marking or discussion. Prompts for learning, prominently displayed in classrooms, such as 'working walls' with key vocabulary, provide clear ongoing guidance. Pupils take pride in colouring in the smiley faces on their individual target sheets as they reach each level. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and include praise for their achievements and indicate where they could improve. Teachers generally use assessment information well to pitch work at the right level for different groups. Occasionally, the work is too demanding for most of the class. For example, although Year 2 pupils enjoyed reading nonsense poems, they struggled to analyse them. In contrast, apart from those less confident, other pupils ♦ were not fully challenged as they added amounts of money. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, supporting them skilfully during lessons and in small withdrawal groups. Teachers do not always deploy them effectively, however, at the beginning and end of lessons. Discussion involving the whole class led by one teacher means that opportunities are missed for pupils to make individual contributions in smaller groups and for adults to note their levels of understanding.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders at all levels share a determination to ensure pupils have the best possible start to their education. All staff are aware of their individual roles in sustaining improvement and moving further forward because this drive is embedded in the schools' ethos. Through

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frequent informal class visits and a sequence of planned observations, leaders identify good practice and share this with colleagues. The governing body plays an important part in self-evaluation and members visit regularly to gather first-hand information. They use the wealth of assessment information to help determine strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance, but the lack of a succinct summary of pupils' progress through the school hinders the efficiency of this process.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities is clearly evident in its day-to-day life. An adult is on hand at every turn to encourage pupils to believe in themselves and make the best of school. Any discrepancy in the achievement of different groups is quickly spotted. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and implemented rigorously. Safeguarding issues are embedded into the curriculum so that pupils are frequently involved in assessing risks. All staff are clear about their responsibilities regarding child protection. Health and safety audits are carried out regularly and staff training is kept up to date.

Community cohesion is promoted well. Extremely positive relationships with parents and carers have been established. They were keen to tell inspectors about the school's open door policy. Staff and governors make continuous efforts to engage with the local community. A breakfast club is appreciated by parents and contributes to pupils' social development. Regular curriculum meetings help parents gain a greater understanding of how their children learn. Pupils' work in history, geography and religious education helps them to gain insights into the similarities and differences across communities, at a level appropriate to their age.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and generally reach levels that are at or above those expected by the end of the Reception year. They play well together and are happy to take



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on responsibilities such as registering their arrival and organising resources. They show great enthusiasm as they choose from the good range of activities on offer, often showing initiative as they pursue their own interests. They talk readily to staff and visitors.

Children arrive each day to a stimulating, varied and well-organised learning environment. Activities are well planned to achieve a good balance between indoor and outdoor learning. Links with parents and carers are strong. They accompany their children into school and often stay for a while as children show them what they have accomplished. They appreciate this opportunity to have a brief word with staff.

There is a common sense of purpose across the teaching team. Staff promote children's social and language development well and record their progress across all areas of learning through regular observations, collecting samples of their work and, when possible, photographing significant moments. There are some anomalies between the assessment records received from children's pre-school settings and the baseline assessment undertaken by the Reception staff. There are also differences in the overall picture of children's attainment at the end of Reception and the assessments made of the same children early in Year 1. This hinders the ability of school leaders to gain an accurate overview of progress across these two years.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

All parents and carers were happy overall with their children's experience. Except for three parents, who indicated individual concerns, they were unanimous in their positive opinion of all aspects of the school. The inspection findings endorsed these views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heronshaw 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	78	16	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	89	8	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	62	27	36	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	76	18	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	86	11	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	76	18	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	71	21	28	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	66	20	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	68	24	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	61	24	32	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	61	27	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	64	84	12	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	86	11	14	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



11 February 2011


Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Heronshaw School, Milton Keynes MK7 7PG**

Thank you for making my colleagues and me welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you that it is a good school and saw for ourselves how much you enjoy life at Heronshaw. You are making good progress because your teachers are really good at finding exciting ways for you to learn. We were really pleased to see how well you behave and how everyone gets on so well together.

It was good to see how proud you were when filling in your target books. This helps teachers keep track of how well you are doing. In most lessons, all of you have to 'put your thinking caps on', although sometimes you find things too easy or too difficult. You can help teachers get this exactly right by telling them when you find things difficult to understand or when you would like to try something a little harder. Many of you benefit from the extra support you receive in class and from working outside lessons with the teaching assistants. They do a great job. We have suggested that they could work more often with small groups from the start of lessons, so that you all get a good chance to ask questions, and at the end of lessons, so that more of you can report back on what you have learned.

You are really well looked after by all the adults. Not only that, but you take good care of one another too. It was interesting to find out how much the school council and the play leaders contribute and we know the adults appreciate the many other ways that children help the school to run smoothly. Small things, like tidying up after messy work, show how much you care about your school. The staff keep really good records of how you are getting on and we have suggested ways that these could be put together to show how make progress from when you start in Reception to the end of Year 2.

We are sure you will keep enjoying school and trying hard. We wish you  all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton  
Lead inspector

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