

Heathcoat Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113343
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357324
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Burchall HMI

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	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Manning
Headteacher	Jon Statton
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors carried out 24 lesson observations covering 18 teachers. They met with senior leaders, staff, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and spoke with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' exercise books, school data about pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring records, safeguarding and child protection documentation, and the school improvement plan. Inspectors considered responses to questionnaires from 100 pupils, 109 parents and carers and 32 members of staff.

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

- The impact of the school's strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing.
- How well teaching, marking and curriculum opportunities support all pupils to make as much progress as they can.
- How well the school promotes national and international community cohesion.
- How successfully the school has been in raising and sustaining levels of attendance.

Information about the school

Heathcoat Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school serving Tiverton and surrounding areas. It is a two-form entry school where pupils are taught in both mixed- and single-year classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has fallen in recent years and is now below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The overall percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has recently increased and is now above average.

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

Heathcoat Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. Many enter the school with skills which are below those which are typically expected for their age. During their time at school, pupils make good progress so that when they leave at the end of Year 6 they have attained standards that are above average in mathematics and average in English.

Teaching is good because teachers make good use of assessment information; they know when pupils need extra support and help, and plan appropriately to meet their needs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly strong. A range of interventions coupled with close monitoring of their progress has ensured that these pupils make consistently good progress. An improved focus on promoting writing has recently seen standards in this area begin to improve. The school is aware that it needs to continue this focus in order to accelerate progress still further.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are a strong feature of this school. Pupils
◆truly value the support the school provides and report that they are happy at school

The school makes very good use of its extensive grounds which have been creatively developed to provide a number of exciting areas such as a sensory garden, the amphitheatre and the kitchen garden. These are used well to enhance the curriculum and to support learning outdoors.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well supported with a good range of indoor experiences which ensure they make good progress. Many enjoy learning outside although presently not all classes are provided with a sufficient range of outdoor activities. In addition, strict limitations on the number of Reception children outside at any time potentially inhibits their ability to learn in the environment they might prefer. ◆

The senior leadership team works well together. Together with the governing body, they have a clear picture of what the school needs to do to improve further. Overall, the school's self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Plans are in place to address areas for development. Strategies already implemented have been well considered and are showing some signs of impact, such as in beginning to raise standards in English. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards in writing by:

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- providing more opportunities for pupils to talk both in whole-class activities and in group work to enable them to communicate their thinking before writing
- embedding the use of adult-led guided group work in order to accelerate progress.
- Develop further the use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure children have more frequent opportunities to choose where to learn and a greater range of activities from which to choose.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

From their starting points pupils make good progress because they are typically well taught and given good support to enhance their learning. As a result, they enjoy lessons, participate fully and, by the end of Year 6, they achieve well. In the vast majority of lessons observed pupils made good progress. Likewise pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to very good, targeted support. Pupils concentrate well and work with enthusiasm as most tasks were engaging and appropriately challenging.

Academic standards are broadly average overall. After a dip in 2009 an above average number of pupils reached the expected levels of attainment in mathematics in the national tests in 2010. A high proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in this subject. The school recognises the fact that progress rates in English are not as positive, especially in writing. Robust action has been taken by middle and senior leaders to introduce strategies which have begun to raise achievement in this area. Pupils receive activities closely matched to their needs. Pupils in older year groups with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with delayed language development, receive a range of well-orchestrated basic skills programmes. Pupils receive support in class and through withdrawal groups; with groupings altering as assessment information is updated. For example, an intervention session on phonics for a ♦ group in Year 2, was characterised by the use of appealing visual resources and adult input that focused sharply on both pupils' emerging fluency and their comprehension.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a potentially unsafe situation and how to keep themselves safe. They are, for example, well versed on internet safety. They are well behaved both in lessons and as they move around the school. They have good opportunities to reflect spiritually due to a good focus on art, music and performance. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles. The healthy snack shop at break time is very popular and pupils keep themselves active during break times, making good use of the extensive grounds for physical activity. Pupils' attendance rates over recent years have fluctuated. However, due to a concerted effort by senior leaders, attendance is now average. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through an active school council and by undertaking responsibilities. They act, for example, as snack monitors and older pupils compose and read stories to their younger peers.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
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	2
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?

Lessons ensure there is a strong emphasis on explaining learning objectives, key vocabulary and demonstrating new concepts and skills. Teachers use good questioning skills to allow pupils to reflect on their own understanding. Activities are typically engaging and well-matched to pupils' learning needs. As a result, pupils usually display positive attitudes to learning and are being helped to develop good study skills such as the ability to edit their own writing and to engage in research. Information and communication technology is used well to help sequence learning and to model new concepts. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils in small groups both in class and in withdrawal sessions. On occasions, lessons involve too much 'teacher talk' and opportunities to encourage pupils' independence in their learning are not sufficiently exploited. In particular, there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate their ideas in order to refine their language for thinking as well as communicating.

Teachers are increasingly effective in using assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. Regular review meetings of pupils' progress help to identify those in need of additional support. Teams have worked hard to assess pupils' progress and to moderate judgements. This information is now used to good effect to plan to meet pupils' differing needs, including intervention groups and to set and monitor challenging targets. Pupils know their targets and they receive regular feedback in order that they know the next steps they need to take in their learning. Good use is made of adult-led guided group work

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to accelerate progress in some areas of the curriculum such as reading. This successful approach is yet to be fully embedded across the curriculum.

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of experiences. These are enriched by numerous school visits, extensive use of the school grounds and creative partnerships such as pupils sending e-mails to HMS Enterprise to find out about how people live in the countries which the ship visits. Good links are made across the curriculum, for example the Year 2 pancake day activities successfully linked reading, numeracy and design and technology. The school places a good emphasis on inspiring pupils to take part in writing activities; pupils in Years 3 and 4 take part in a weekly writing competition and those in Years 5 and 6 post articles about world events on their 'press board'.

Vulnerable pupils are provided with very good support due to the close relationships the school has with a wide range of outside agencies such as speech therapy, the county autism team, mental health services and home?school liaison workers. Strong pastoral provision is embedded throughout the school. Teachers use circle time and positive behaviour management strategies well to support pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils access friendship groups, art therapy groups and social skills groups as needed. They truly value the support the school provides and report that they are happy at school. Pupils are well supported for transition into secondary school and receive good guidance to help them understand about career choices.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led by a committed senior leadership team. Roles and responsibilities are well matched to individuals' strengths and areas of expertise. Middle leaders are actively involved in the school improvement cycle and have a very good grasp of issues in hand. High morale and a real commitment to improvement are evident at all levels of the staff team. A comprehensive school improvement plan is in place and all staff take responsibility for the part they play in delivering this, for example in raising pupils' attainment in writing.

The governing body knows the school well and has a good insight into what steps are needed to bring about further improvement. It provides the school with appropriate levels of challenge which is well balanced with support when needed. The governing body has a high profile in the school and liaises well with both senior and middle leaders and has developed a good understanding of the work of the school. As a result, it is well placed to further challenge the school to improve.

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Both senior and middle leaders are involved in actively monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching through implementing a range of relevant activities such as lesson observations, work scrutiny and tracking of pupils' progress. As a result, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and take appropriate steps to develop teaching where necessary; regular pupil progress meetings hold staff to account. The school successfully strives to be inclusive; care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. A good focus in lessons has been given to ensure all pupils can achieve, for example the needs of boys are considered when planning lessons and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported.

The school has worked successfully to develop and improve partnerships and communication with parents and carers; a key feature of which has been the development of a parent and carer representative group. The school rightly encourages those parents and carers who have previously had fewer opportunities to engage in the life of the school to become members of this group.

The senior leadership team has a suitable understanding of safeguarding issues. Governors have supported the school well to enhance their child protection procedures and staff at all levels are well trained. Robust recruitment systems are in place and comprehensive records are held regarding relevant suitability checks. The school takes all reasonable steps to secure pupils' safety while in school and plans are in place to enhance this still further.

Pupils have a good insight into both the school and the local community. However, links with diverse communities in the United Kingdom and abroad have yet to be developed. A recent audit undertaken by the school correctly identifies this as an area that needs to be addressed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with skills which are below those expected of their age, and make good progress so they start to catch up. They are happy and settled and their emotional and physical needs are well met. They are learning to work together, share and take turns. Good attention is given to developing children's communication skills. In particular, those in need of extra support attend regular narrative groups planned to meet their specific needs.

Children's good progress while in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well documented in their 'learning journeys'. These include a good range of observations which are evaluated well to show children's achievements. Systems to track and monitor progress in Reception are comprehensive and plans are in place for a similar approach to be adopted by nursery staff. ♦ Classrooms provide children with a good range of accessible activities which promote all areas of learning. However, outside areas do not consistently reflect the breadth of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. In the Reception class, the need for children to take turns in going outdoors means the frequency with which pupils can choose to undertake their learning outdoors is restricted.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Staff work well together as a team so that children receive the same experiences across classes. The team leader has a good overview and supports the team well. Together they recognise where improvements to provision can be made and draw upon good practice models in order to plan how to develop provision further.

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 highly supportive of the school. 'Staff are approachable, happy, professional, supportive and knowledgeable', 'The amount of learning and progress my child has made has been impressive' and 'The grounds are excellent and children get to use these effectively' are typical examples of the comments made. Respondents overwhelmingly confirmed that their children enjoy school. Inspectors endorse these and the other positive comments made. A small percentage of parents and carers raised concerns regarding how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Again, careful consideration was given to this aspect by the inspection team. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour to be good in lessons, in the playground and around the school. A small percentage also raised some concerns about the security of the site. The negative issues

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raised were few in number. Parents and carers are encouraged to take these up with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	49	55	50	1	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	52	45	41	7	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	36	52	48	11	2	2	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	44	54	50	3	3	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	51	47	43	5	1	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	51	48	44	4	1	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	59	36	33	7	0	0	2
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)	45	41	52	48	3	2	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	43	51	47	6	4	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	35	48	44	11	7	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	33	59	54	5	2	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	51	47	50	46	4	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	54	42	39	5	2	2	1

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).

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">■ 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 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heathcoat Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 5HE

I am writing to say how much we enjoyed visiting your school and seeing all the exciting things you are learning. Thank you to those of you who came to speak with the inspectors. We could see how hard you all been work and how well you are all doing.

Your headteacher and all your teachers do a great job and give you lots of exciting and interesting things to do in school. You are particularly lucky to have such lovely outside areas to learn in. We saw that all teachers and their assistants keep a close eye on each of you and make sure they help all of you to learn as much as you can. We agree with you that you go to a good school that cares for you very well.

We have asked your teachers and governors to do some things to help to make your school even better. First, we want them to help you all make even more progress with your writing. Second, we want them to give children in the Nursery and Reception classes even more time to learn outdoors and more things to do when they are out there.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and by making sure you come to school as often as you can. I hope you continue to enjoy your learning at Heathcoat Primary School.

Best wishes

Jane Burchall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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