

Heron Way Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125887
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381147
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Haining
Headteacher	James Crump
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 27 lessons and 12 teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers, and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the governing body minutes. In addition, questionnaires from 113 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils, were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment in providing for pupils' individual needs, and how well pupils are involved in assessing their own learning.
- Pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance their cultural development.
- How well the staff are enabling the school's aims to be achieved in providing a curriculum 'for the 21st Century child' and contributing to pupils' higher achievement.
- In the light of the changes in the school's leadership, how effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, are enabling the necessary continuity and improvement.

Information about the school

Heron Way is an above average size primary school that takes pupils from across the town of Horsham. The vast majority of pupils have White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. These needs include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class, and a combined Year 1/Reception class.

The headteacher, was promoted from within the staff at the school, and took up the post in September of this year.

The school has a number of awards, including ArtsMark Gold.

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?

1

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Heron Way is an outstanding school. This success is due in particular to the highly effective management, the inspiring curriculum and the outstanding quality of pastoral care. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know the school’s strengths and what needs to be refined further very well. Their rigorous monitoring and clear self-evaluation, and a track record of employing initiatives to inspire pupils and treat them all as individuals, have also contributed to pupils’ excellent progress. These factors illustrate the school’s excellent capacity for continuing its improvement. Reflecting the very positive views expressed by almost all parents and carers, one parent wrote: ‘There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff, and a real sense of a school community. I am impressed at how far my children have progressed both academically, and in their confidence, independence and social skills.’

Pupils’ personal development and their wider educational outcomes in art and music, for example, are excellent, while sporting activities are extensive and much enjoyed by pupils. Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They acquire a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices and make an exceptional contribution to the school community. Attendance is high, as pupils enjoy all their time at school. Pupils’ behaviour and their keen appetite for teamwork, together with their outstanding skills in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning.

Very effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make excellent progress immediately in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This outstanding start is built on extremely well, and national test results for pupils in Year 6 have been high for the last five years, and these results show that the school consistently reaches its carefully formulated and challenging targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those assessed as gifted and talented, make excellent progress. This is due to the high priority the school gives to meeting every pupil’s identified needs. This exemplary level of commitment is founded on creating a friendly and calm environment where individuality is celebrated. As a result of the setting of effective short-term targets for improving language, literacy and numeracy skills, pupils who had previously struggled to learn achieve extremely well.

All staff work hard to create attractive classrooms with imaginative displays, and therefore provide a very positive learning environment. A huge range of additional

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activities, visits and visitors enhances the outstanding curriculum. Although there are minor variations, the overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Lessons are planned to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. Planning is thorough and based on the careful use of rigorous assessments.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works effectively with many local nurseries, playgroups and local businesses. Its audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. While the links with the local community are excellent, and those with schools abroad are developed well, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are not yet developed sufficiently well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - instigating the findings of its careful analysis
 - implementing its plans to link with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils relish their learning at this school. Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of pupils make excellent overall progress, regardless of their background or ability. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are generally in line with those expected for their age. The outstanding progress in the Key Stage 1 classes is firmly based on meeting individual pupils' needs. This success is built on exceptionally well in Key Stage 2. In all lessons, behaviour is impeccable and pupils acquire excellent skills and working habits, working either independently or with their classmates. These factors help to create the high-quality climate for learning that was evident in all classes.

Pupils' work in classrooms shows that not only is progress in English, mathematics and science now outstanding across the school, but also that pupils do very well in other subjects. For example, outstanding displays show the strength of art and design and are a good indication of how the school acquired the ArtsMark Gold award. The extremely effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is based on the very careful coordination of resources and the excellent support by the learning mentors and teaching assistants. Through identifying pupils' needs early they ensure that they make consistently outstanding progress.

Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and contribute to the positive ethos for study. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development is outstanding, contributing to their excellent behaviour. Throughout the school, inspectors were impressed by the consistently high standards of social skills of all pupils. Pupils’ knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding. Pupils are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community through, for example, working with pupils from a local special school on a weekly basis.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Observations of teaching confirmed that, throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress regardless of their background or ability because of the very effective approach adopted by teachers. In all the lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented through well-thought-out planning, and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in the excellent English and mathematics lessons throughout the school. In all lessons, the pupils could hardly wait to join in and share their thoughts and ideas. Staff’s high expectations of pupils’ progress are reflected in the challenging targets they negotiate with each other. The careful planning is implemented with enthusiasm and care, and these targets are used effectively. Teachers’ excellent use of praise, and the attention they give to using pupils’ success criteria, is a reflection of the way in which, in almost all lessons, teachers take all learning opportunities that arise and enable the outstanding progress.

Teachers enthuse pupils and keep them engaged in their work. When pupils are

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

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asked to work together, they do so very effectively. They keep on task, challenge each other and plan their work carefully. Pupils enjoy working independently, and respond well to teachers’ questions, particularly where these really probe their thinking and understanding. In many lessons, the curriculum planning provides a stunning variety of activities and opportunities. This was very evident in an outstanding English lesson in the Year 5 class where pupils were writing in the first person and empathising with those who lived through air-raids in the Second World War. From out of nowhere an air-raid siren began to moan and the pupils, and staff, disappeared under the tables to shelter, only to emerge when the all-clear sounded to quietly get on with their work. An astonishing, and hugely effective, insight into the time and stress involved.

The range of opportunities that pupils are given, through the outstanding curriculum and through the support given to different groups, is excellent. Pupils are particularly excited by the extra-curricular activities. As one boy said, ‘Our school is brilliant at sport – the Saturday morning football club is great.’ As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is excellent and caring. Provision in the after-school club is highly regarded by pupils, parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, although newly appointed, already provides outstanding leadership, drive and ambition to sustain the school’s excellent capacity to improve. This, in partnership with the very effective leadership team and governing body, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and everyone, including the administrative team and caretaking staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and work exceptionally well together. As one staff member said, reflecting the views of all, ‘I thoroughly enjoy being part of the team and believe that this school is outstanding.’

The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to become even better. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school’s work is honest and accurate. The very effective governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging, but supportive, manner.

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Excellent attention is paid by staff at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. There are, for example, thorough procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. Pupils’ safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The staff are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all pupils across all aspects of the school’s work. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good and pupils have a wide understanding of different international faiths and cultures. A recent audit of the curriculum has identified the need to expand pupils’ awareness about national perspectives.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The huge level of commitment and care shown by Reception staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well, and immediately begin to learn. A series of induction mornings enable the staff, children and their families to get to know each other and help make sure that starting school is a happy event. These meetings lead to the full involvement of the local community, which continues right through the school. As one parent said, ‘The transition into Reception was smooth for our son and for us as new parents to the school.’

Staff know the children very well and opportunities for children to decide on what they want to do, to get out the required equipment and to get on with their task give children a real sense of determining their own way forward, and guarantee their full involvement in all activities. Such is their independence and confidence that they can already explain why they had made their choices. The leaf paintings and prints the children completed after their thrilling walk in the woods were a good example of

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how, after just six weeks, they are making their own decisions and carrying them out. Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed extremely well and clear priorities are set for improvement. Planning is excellent because careful account is taken of the rigorous ongoing assessments of children’s progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and academically, and engage well with their learning. At all times, staff engage and stimulate the children’s interests. As a result, there were high levels of enjoyment and concentration as children built their castles, helped each other out when weighing conkers and fir cones, and focused relentlessly on getting their writing right. The classrooms are stimulating and the outside area, although now being planned for further development, provides a good level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more-able children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The level of return of questionnaires from parents and carers was around the national average. The overwhelming majority of these parents and carers, and those who spoke to the inspection team, were very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and the overwhelming majority strongly agree or agree that their children make good progress. Parents and carers were particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. The majority also felt that the school dealt very well with any disruptive behaviour. Inspectors fully endorse these views. There were a very small number of parental concerns, particularly about the school’s promotion of a healthy lifestyle. These were shared and discussed with the headteacher and governors. Inspection evidence shows that these misgivings, while understandable, are unnecessary, and are fully understood by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heron Way 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 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	69	33	29	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	74	28	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	54	48	57	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	51	51	45	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	63	41	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	61	54	46	41	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	50	45	40	9	8	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)	47	42	55	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	58	51	52	46	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	40	60	53	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	38	58	51	4	4	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	68	60	43	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	78	69	33	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heron Way Primary School, Horsham, RH13 6DJ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with what those of you we spoke to told us – Heron Way is an excellent school.

These are the main reasons why we thought the school was so good.

- You make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times. We were very impressed that you knew what to do to make your work even better.
- Children in the Reception classes get off to a great start at school.
- We saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school, and on Saturday morning.
- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school.
- You all really enjoy being in school, and your attendance is excellent. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and Year 6 Buddies do a super job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers – all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

Even in outstanding schools there are some things that can be even better. We have asked your teachers to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places in this country that are different from where you live.

In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make the best possible progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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