

INSPECTION REPORT

HEATHER RIDGE INFANT SCHOOL

Camberley

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125017

Headteacher: Ms Jan Whatling

Reporting inspector: David W Shannon
5240

Dates of inspection: 07/02/00-08/02/00

Inspection number: 194825

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Martindale Avenue Camberley Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pat Parry
Date of previous inspection:	19/11/96-21/11/96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards in English and mathematics are good and above the national average.• Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.• The headteacher displays highly effective leadership and very good management skills and is well supported by governors and staff.• Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and make a strong contribution to the pupils' good progress.• The pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well together. Teachers and other adults provide positive role models.• The parents' support for the school is very good and they are pleased with the education it provides	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school does not make full use of both National and benchmark data to rigorously analyse pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1.	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Heather Ridge Infant School is about the same size as most other infant schools nationally. The school takes pupils from the Heatherside development, which contains a broad social mix. There are 175 pupils organised into six parallel classes. The number of boys and girls is broadly similar. Thirty of these pupils are part time and are in the parallel reception classes. There are 4% of pupils for whom English is an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. There are 20 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. No pupils take free schools meals, which is well below the national average. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of attainment but overall pupils' attainment on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It achieves high standards, and pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good. Throughout the school behaviour is good. The leadership and management are very effective and the teaching is good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are good and above the national average.
- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and very good management skills and is well supported by governors and staff.
- Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and make a strong contribution to the pupils' good progress.
- The pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well together. Teachers and other adults provide positive role models.
- The parents' support for the school is very good and they are pleased with the education it provides.

What could be improved

- The school does not make full use of both National and benchmark data to rigorously analyse pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection in November 1996. Over the last four years, standards have risen in writing and reading. In mathematics, results are above the national average but improvement has not been as significant as in writing and reading. The school has successfully addressed the two areas for development identified in the previous report. A small number of minor issues identified in the main body of the previous report have also been successfully addressed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A	A	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A	A	A	A	
Mathematics	A	A	A	B	

This is a very good set of results. The table shows that standards over the last three years have been very high compared with national averages. The school had good results in the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds. They were higher than the national averages and those for similar schools. Evidence from the inspection confirms these high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The standard of work seen from five-year-olds was above the expectations for their age. The school sets challenging targets for individual pupils and works hard to achieve them. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They are responsive and eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils respect each other's values and beliefs.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, the teaching in the school is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory in 94%, good or better in 56% and very good or excellent in 22%. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. Most lessons seen were for literacy and numeracy. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy frameworks, which is reflected in the medium and short-term plans. Activities are well matched to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers make good use of modelling techniques to teach reading and number. In general, pupils are very clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. The pupils help and learn from each other and get through a substantial amount of work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and the varied topics ensure good cross curricular links which help pupils with their learning. Teachers plan well together to ensure consistency and continuity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school plans well for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to make good progress. Pupils are well supported by classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school provides well for the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for moral and social development is very good. Staff provide good role models and set clear expectations for behaviour. Spiritual development is good with opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and major festivals are celebrated. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good care for all pupils and has highly effective systems for ensuring health, safety and well being.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. The whole school staff work well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	An effective system of committees enables the governing body to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Governors are very supportive towards the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Not as good in using national performance data to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's end of Key Stage 1 tests.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan is an effective management tool that prioritises areas for development over time. The school's overall resources are well matched to priorities. In making educational and financial decisions, good account is taken of best value principles.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like coming to school. • Parents are pleased with the progress their children make. • The leadership and management skills of the headteacher and her very approachable manner. • There is good behaviour around the school. • Staff are approachable, caring and supportive. • Parents believe teaching is good with high expectations and that they are well informed about their child's progress. • The school works closely with parents, with good communication between home and school forming a good partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • A small minority believe there is too much homework at the beginning of the year.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. A small number of parents think that there might be more activities outside lessons. The inspectors consider that in comparison with other infant schools, the range of opportunities is good. Homework is in line with the Department for Education and Employment guidelines for infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English and mathematics are good and above the national average.

1. In the 1999 national assessments for seven-year-olds, standards achieved were above the national average in reading and mathematics and above average when compared with similar benchmark schools. Standards achieved in writing were well above both the national and the benchmark school average. The work seen during the inspection confirms this high attainment.

2. In the reception classes pupils are developing a sound knowledge of phonics and by the time they are seven pupils are able to use a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading different forms of writing such as stories and poems. Reading at home is strongly encouraged and plays a significant role in pupils making good progress. High attaining pupils in Year 2 read fluently and accurately. They read with expression observing commas, full stops and speech marks. Writing is taught very well across the school and by the time they are seven, pupils are familiar with the structure of stories and are able to write different imaginative endings. Pupils write at length and their writing shows a good use of punctuation and good vocabulary including varied connecting words and adjectives. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to use correct spoken and written English.

3. Mathematical skills are well developed across the school. In the reception classes the pupils are learning to count and do simple addition and subtraction using a range of interesting games and resources. By the time they are seven pupils can work confidently with numbers up to a hundred and demonstrate a firm grasp of number facts. For example, they are able to add three two-digit numbers, using multiples of ten, to help them arrive at the answer. Pupils are asked how they solve problems so various strategies are shared. In Year 2, pupils of all abilities have a good concept of time. They recognise and understand hours, while higher attaining pupils recognise half and quarter hours. In September 1999 the National Numeracy Strategy was introduced and the school is using this approach to further develop the pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge.

4. The school effectively supports those that need extra help. In lessons the teachers often set different activities to meet the needs of the different ability groups, which encourages all pupils to work to a suitably high level. The school uses various strategies to encourage pupils to improve the quality of their work. Pupils are set targets, such as 'use more adjectives in your writing' which are written on target cards and kept on their table to remind them.

Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.

5. Teachers plan well and lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. This enables pupils to know what they are doing and to quickly settle to the tasks set for them. Work is well matched to pupils' previous attainment, which helps to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and enables them to make good progress. In a Year 2 mathematics class, lower attainers were exploring number patterns to ten, the middle attainers were using multiples of ten to find answers to adding three numbers up to a hundred, whilst the higher attainers extended this activity by working with numbers beyond a hundred.

6. The teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy. They structure their lessons well with clear introductions and they make good use of the plenary session to reinforce what the pupils have learnt during the lesson. The structure of most lessons also encourages a good pace and some teachers set time targets for class, group and individual activities. This encourages the pupils to work at speed and to concentrate well. In those lessons where teaching was less than good, the pace of the lesson was often too slow so that the pupils began to lose interest and concentration which led to more limited progress in learning.

7. Teachers use good questioning techniques to ascertain pupils' knowledge and understanding and to extend their learning. In a Year 2 English lesson the teacher's questioning probed the children's understanding of the vocabulary used in some poems and their knowledge of techniques such

as alliteration. Pupils are also willing and confident enough to ask questions of the teacher, which helps clarify aspects of the lesson for them. Teachers use a good range of interesting resources to stimulate the pupils' interest and to consolidate learning. In a religious education lesson, for example, the teacher used a beautiful cloak to demonstrate Joseph's coat of many colours.

8. Teachers set high expectations for the pupils' behaviour and for the quality and quantity of the work that should be achieved. They provide good role models for the pupils and model various techniques across a range of subjects so that the pupils have a good, clear example of what is expected of them and how to do it. In a literacy lesson where pupils were required to change the end of a story, the teacher had prepared a different ending, which was written on the board for the children to study. In a music lesson the children repeated the singing after the teacher in order to copy the correct rhythm. The teacher also demonstrated the correct way to play various musical instruments that the pupils were then able to copy. Teachers have formed good relationships with the pupils and have an encouraging, positive approach. Support staff and parent helpers are also positive and encouraging, which helps pupils develop very good attitudes to school and learning.

The headteacher displays highly effective leadership and very good management skills and she is well supported by governors and staff.

9. One of the key factors for Heather Ridge Infant School being so effective is due to the very good leadership and management skills provided by the headteacher.

10. As a leader she has established a very clear set of aims that permeate the everyday life of the school. This makes a strong contribution to the high standards and good progress made by the pupils. Staff, parents and governors recognise and value the strong leadership that the headteacher provides. She is a dynamic and high profile leader who can be seen throughout the day round and about the school. She is a source of inspiration to others and a good motivator. Under her leadership, staff work well together as a coherent team; for example, in planning the curriculum and in monitoring the quality and standards in classrooms.

11. The school's development plan is a good example of her management skills. This is a well-structured and comprehensive document that involves staff, governors and parents in its compilation and review. It is an effective management tool, identifying areas for development, tasks, timescales, financial implications and success criteria. Together these promote institutional development and also give clear direction to the work of the school. There is clear and comprehensive written documentation that guides the work of all staff; for example, curriculum planning sheets, homework booklets and a monitoring and evaluation policy.

12. The Governing Body is very supportive of the school. They have trust in the headteacher, but expect her to be fully accountable to them. They make regular visits and report back to meetings of the governing body. These visits, together with an effective system of committees with clear terms of reference, enable governors to have a secure view of the school's development.

13. Since the last inspection, the school has drawn up and implemented a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation policy. The results of the monitoring activities, together with a systematic and rigorous appraisal system linked to staff development and training, have had a positive impact on raising standards and quality. The school makes good use of the results of tests, such as baseline assessments, to predict progress and there is some analysis of the national assessment results. Further analysis of the test results would enable the school to raise standards even higher by discovering which areas require more emphasis. A more detailed comparison of the school's results with those of similar benchmark schools would aid the school in target setting.

Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and make a strong contribution to the pupils' good progress.

14. Pupils at Heather Ridge are confident learners. They are very articulate and are eager to contribute ideas and suggestions. This was evident in the reception class where pupils were able to observe closely and provide explanations as to what happened to porridge when milk was added. Year 2 pupils in science were able to make predictions about forces and could clearly put forward their own ideas and suggestions. This willingness to discuss and predict enhances children's problem

solving skills; they are able to analyse their thinking to form solutions. Pupils are also good listeners; they show respect for each other's ideas and values. They handle resources with care. For example, during a religious education lesson, pupils were aware of the values of Islam and took great care of the artefacts. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher's comments, responding well to instructions and working at a good pace. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Reception, they were keen to complete the set activities. Pupils' very good attitudes enable teachers to provide stimulating and exciting learning opportunities without forfeiting behaviour.

15. Pupils take responsibility for tasks in the classrooms and around the school; they take registers to the office and help with the music in assemblies. They are independent and resourceful. In reception children were able to resolve issues about the role-play without recourse to the teacher. Pupils have no qualms about suggesting and developing ideas; for example, one child in assembly suggested that they start a skipping club.

The pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well together. Teachers and other adults provide positive role models.

16. There is a very positive ethos in the school. When asked, pupils say they are happy and really enjoy school. In many lessons, pupils' behaviour is very good. They stay well on task, even when there is no direct teacher input. For example, in a Year 2 class those pupils working independently on making compound words were quiet and fully absorbed. However, on occasion when the pace of a lesson becomes a little slower, some pupils can become inattentive. Often pupils regulate their own behaviour because they have clear ideas about what is acceptable. For example, when working in groups, pupils remind each other of the school rules. On the first day of the inspection, pupils were unable to take morning playtime because of heavy rain. Very high standards of behaviour were observed in all classrooms, where pupils either talked quietly to their friends or engaged in the wide range of activities that were available to them. During playtimes pupils share equipment fairly and play harmoniously.

17. One of the school aims is to, 'develop good personal relationships with other children and with adults.' This aim is well met in practice. All adults who work in the school, including those who come into help on a voluntary basis, provide good role models. Pupils have high self-esteem and share in each other's successes; for example, 'The Golden Book' awards at assembly times. Parents feel that teachers use praise very effectively and this enhances relationships. All pupils feel valued and part of the school community.

The parents' support for the school is very good and they are pleased with the education it provides.

18. Parents are interested in the school and support their children very effectively. They are very pleased with the education that it provides. Many parents come into school and help in a variety of ways including reading, design technology and science. The head teacher and other staff are very approachable and parents appreciate this openness and feel that it greatly contributes to the strong community atmosphere in the school. The beginning and end of day arrangements are particularly effective; parents can have quick discussions with teachers both in the morning and afternoon. Through the thriving Parents Association large sums are raised for specific projects. One scheme that involves both parents, teachers and pupils is the Playground 2000 project, an exciting idea that is going to improve part of the extensive grounds and give pupils a heightened awareness of environmental issues.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school does not make full use of both national and benchmark data to rigorously analyse pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1.

19. The school sets end of Key Stage 1 targets for each pupil as a result of baseline screening and the information supplied from Surrey Education Service. Pupils' individual targets are regularly monitored and sometimes changed as they progress through the school. The school builds up detailed information about each pupil that helps to predict outcomes at the end of each year.

20. Although there is some analysis of the national test data, further analysis would enable the school to raise standards even higher. A more detailed analysis of the school's results with those of similar benchmark schools would assist the target setting process and identify strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The headteacher has stated that she is learning how to do this, so the need has been recognised. The school is well placed to take this work forward.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

21. Develop the use of national and benchmark data to enable the school and governors to:

- rigorously assess its own performance against the performance of all and similar schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, mathematics and science;
- assist in the setting of targets for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5.5	17	33	39	5.5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		160
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	32	27	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	29
	Girls	25	27	26
	Total	53	57	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	97 (97)	93 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	30
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	54	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	93 (99)	95 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	156
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	305323
Total expenditure	320660
Expenditure per pupil	2004
Balance brought forward from previous year	33738
Balance carried forward to next year	18401

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	116

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	19	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	40	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	23	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	53	6	2	0
The teaching is good.	76	22	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	53	4	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	38	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	9	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	28	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	40	14	1	17