



Heathfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103329
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276895
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 13 June 2006
Reporting inspector David Rzeknik HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Heathfield Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B19 1HJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4646474
Number on roll	470	Fax number	0121 4644413
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Marjorie Bartley
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs A.S. Powell-Williams

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors studied national and school data, scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, met with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, individual staff, including learning mentors and a French teacher from the local secondary school, and the school council. General discussions took place with pupils and their work was scrutinised. Inspectors observed a number of lessons and a joint lesson observation was undertaken with the headteacher. Discussions were held with the chair of governors and parents, and inspectors read all 294 questionnaires sent to them.

Description of the school

Heathfield is a larger-than-average primary school with a part-time nursery. It is situated in Handsworth, a socially deprived part of Birmingham. Most pupils are of Asian origin, mainly from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. A handful are of White or Black heritage. The numbers of pupils whose first language is not English is very high and most speak little English when they start school. The percentage claiming free schools meals, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, is higher than normal. Pupils enter the Nursery with attainment that is much lower than the level expected for their age.

The school has received the Healthy Schools standard and the Leading Aspect for Inclusion award. A Children's Centre is being built on site to extend pre-school and health care provision in the neighbourhood. It is scheduled to open in November 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Striving for success in the heart of the community' is the school's aim. The phrase is the first thing you read when opening the school prospectus. Inspectors judge that the school lives up to its aim in word and deed. They also agree with the school's view of its success.

Heathfield is a good school with some exemplary features. It provides good value for money, has made good improvement since its last inspection, and is well placed to improve further. It is a school of which the community can be proud. One parent remarked, 'I am privileged to send my child to such a school.' It is no wonder that the school is popular and oversubscribed.

Inspectors were struck by the warm, friendly atmosphere and the sea of smiling faces as they walked through the front door. Pupils give the school 10 out of 10 when asked how much they enjoy life there. They point out how much the staff do for them both in and out of school. Their views are listened to and they contribute readily to the decisions about school life. For example, the school council has been instrumental in improving school meals, by introducing healthy options, and developing the outside environment.

In 2005, overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were broadly in line with the national average. Pupils get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and continue to make good progress as they move through the school because teaching is effective and the curriculum meets their needs well. The school recognises that pupils' writing skills, particularly their spelling, punctuation and presentation of work, are not sufficiently well developed.

The school's provision for care, well-being and personal development is outstanding. The well-established routines of daily life ensure the boundaries are clear and pupils say they feel safe, secure and happy. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary, and whatever their background or ability they flourish in the school's secure and caring environment. They know that the adults who work with them really care and want them to give of their best. Teachers, governors and support staff get on very well and race relations are excellent. The school is very successful in removing the obstacles that hinder pupils' progress. The work that the learning mentors do to help the most vulnerable pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult, who are lonely or withdrawn or simply 'finding their feet' because they are new, is first-rate. The provision enables these pupils to succeed and benefit from all the school has to offer.

Good teaching and enrichment opportunities provided in and out of school underpin the school's success. In the lessons seen, the very good relationships and pupils' desire to give of their best support learning well. Teaching assistants effectively communicate using their home language to increase pupils' understanding and clarify their thinking. The attractive displays are testimony to the good standards of work and some of the art work is stunning. Senior staff are aware that inconsistencies in planning exist and this means that at times work is not always properly matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Assessment information is successfully used to track pupils' achievements

and inform decisions about intervention. This said, pupils' listening and speaking skills are not sufficiently well evaluated and marking is inconsistent. Pupils would benefit from a clearer understanding of their individual targets and the national curriculum level they are working at and how they can achieve the next. Plans are afoot to involve pupils more in evaluating their own performance.

The school is well run and managed. The headteacher is highly effective in creating an environment where all pupils can thrive. Heathfield is not a school that 'rests on its laurels' because there is a culture that, no matter how good things are, there is still room for improvement. The school has successfully recruited staff and governors who represent the community the school serves. It confirms to parents, pupils and the community at large that the school is inclusive and is serious in tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

Senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is effective. This said, the identified weaknesses in provision could be more systematically followed up to iron out inconsistencies in practice. The analysis of data is effective and it is put to good use to set realistic and challenging whole-school targets. Planning for improvement is secure; however, the school improvement plan needs to be sharper. It is not always made sufficiently explicit how initiatives will be monitored and outcomes measured, particularly with regard to their impact on pupils' performance. Links between the various tools used for review could be stronger. Governors are supportive and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Regular reports are made to governors, although they could do more to evaluate the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

•When pupils start in the Nursery their attainment is well below expected levels, particularly in English, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in all areas of learning, although they reach below the expected levels for their age by the time they leave Reception. From Year 1 onwards, pupils make good progress year on year to reach standards that are broadly in line with the national average by the time they leave Year 6. •Pupils say they love being at school and are excellent ambassadors for it.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

•Pupils' personal, spiritual, social and emotional development is outstanding. They have first-rate attitudes, exemplary behaviour and form excellent relations with adults and each other. These are key ingredients in ensuring that they achieve well and develop the necessary personal qualities for adult life. •They relish responsibility. The school council proudly explained how they have improved school dinners by introducing healthy options, and helped improved the quality of life beyond the classroom by establishing learning zones and a very attractive grassed area to play on. •Peer

mediators say they 'keep an eye' on the Friendship Stop to see if there is anyone who requires help or there is a problem that needs sorting out. • Four pupils are representatives on the Young People's Parliament and take part in debates and discussions to improve life in the city. Such work helps pupils gain an understanding of civic duties and the roles and responsibilities of adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

• Children are well taught and pupils make better-than-expected progress. Classes are settled and purposeful places in which to learn. Pupils identified maths as one of the subjects they most enjoy because 'it is interesting and fun.' • The learning mentor support for vulnerable pupils, particularly those with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, is of the highest quality and significantly contributes to their success. • Display of pupils' work and achievements has the 'Wow' factor. Staff have gone the extra mile to celebrate pupils' achievement and work. All classes are well resourced and bright and pupils cannot wait to get into them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

• Learning about life cycles by hatching chicks in the nursery and the animated films produced by Year 5 reflect the interesting and good quality curriculum on offer. • Pupils said how much they enjoyed the 'taster' classes in French and were able to meet and greet inspectors using the language. • The curriculum is well enriched by a wide range of visits. For example, the trip to Blackpool was enjoyed by many pupils, who told inspectors this was the first time they had seen the sea and how great it was to paddle in it. Residential visits to Bockleton, Merevale and Woodland camp are highlights of the school calendar. A member of the school council said how great it was to walk in the countryside and to see wildlife, as well as eating pizza and going bowling.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

• One pupil's comment sums up the level of care: 'My mum doesn't worry about me at school because she knows I am safe and well looked after.' • Very effective work has taken place to improve attendance, which was an area of weakness identified by the previous inspection team. Staff have rightly kept working to improve this and as a result, the school has exceeded its target of 95% so far this year. Ten pupils in each year have been rewarded with 100% attendance certificates. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed receiving Big Lilac and Fang, the two 'Cool Cat' mascots awarded to the class with the best attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

• The school is well led and managed by a committed team under the dedicated leadership of the headteacher. One parent said, 'What makes all the difference is: Heathfield has a headteacher that loves children and loves her job and this filters down to staff and pupils. It is a happy school with devoted staff.' Inspectors agree. • The school built up a larger-than-normal budget surplus over the past couple of years. Governors have effective plans in place to spend the money appropriately on improving accommodation in Year 6 and extending library provision. • A senior teacher when asked what makes the school tick remarked, 'There is a unity of purpose, a togetherness where staff and pupils give of their best.' This sums up the school's culture and why it is going from strength to strength.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Hello, I am one of the inspectors that visited your school. I am writing to tell you what we found out. Thank you for talking to us and for being so friendly and open. I know your mums and dads think the school is good and inspectors agree.

What I liked most:

- Heathfield is a special place where everyone is valued and included. I can see why your parents are so pleased with the school and why they send you there.
- You are happy and I was delighted to hear that you gave the school 10 out of 10 for enjoyment.
- You are really friendly, very well behaved and people of different backgrounds get on so well together.
- We enjoyed talking to the school council and hearing how they improved the lunch menu. My meal was tasty and healthy. I enjoyed the salad bar and my melon was lovely. The improvements you have made to the outdoor play areas are fantastic.
- All the grown-ups work hard to help you learn as much as you can.
- You look after each other. You also took care of me and I liked your smiling faces.
- I liked the displays of your work – I thought some of the art work was stunning. I enjoyed walking through the willow archway. I have asked the teachers to do some things to make Heathfield even better:
- I want you to improve your writing, particularly your spelling, punctuation and presentation of work.
- They are going to record how well you are listening and speaking.
- You will be involved in setting targets and assessing how well you are performing and what you must do to improve further.
- I have asked the teachers and governors to get even better at checking how well the school is doing.

Finally, thank you for my birthday card. It said on the front, 'Have a great time,' and I did in your school.