



# Heronsgate School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110389  
**LEA** Milton Keynes LEA  
**Inspection number** 278422  
**Inspection dates** 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Malcolm Johnstone AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Lichfield Down
<b>School category</b>	Community		Walnut Tree
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Milton Keynes MK7 7BW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 550811
<b>Number on roll</b>	458	<b>Fax number</b>	01908 605273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr A Ashmore
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Harper

<b>Age group</b> 7 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278422
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Héronsgate School is a large community junior school for pupils from 7-11 years. It was previously a middle school taking pupils from 8 to 12 years. The change in designation has resulted in significant staff turnover. Half of the pupil population changed between July and September of this year. Pupils come from very varied social backgrounds. Most pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and statements of special need is broadly average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to that found in other schools. Most of the pupils who attend are of White British Heritage, although there are small groups of pupils from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are the early stages of learning English. Their home languages are Gujarati, Japanese and Somali.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the senior management that this is a satisfactory school with some strong features. There is good provision for pupils' personal development and for their care, guidance and support. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good. The needs of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are met well. The behaviour of pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There is a good curriculum including a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school works well in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being. Most parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work. Standards are average overall, but some pupils underachieve in writing. Standards and pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving as new staff and pupils settle in. Some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. The use of assessment is inconsistent and the pupils' work does not always match their capabilities sufficiently. Leadership and management are satisfactory. School improvement planning is not sufficiently focused on raising attainment and improving teaching. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. After a period of disruption, staffing and pupil mobility is settling down. The school is well placed to improve further and gives satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Raise standards and pupils' achievements in writing\* Sharpen assessment to ensure that all tasks match pupils' capabilities more consistently\* Focus monitoring more rigorously on the key priorities of improving standards, teaching and learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils enter school with broadly average attainment. By the time they leave, standards are similar to national averages in mathematics and science but below average in English. While standards in reading and speaking and listening are in line with national averages, standards in writing are below average. Overall achievement is satisfactory, although standards and achievement in writing should be better. The school has done well to maintain the good standards in ICT noted at the time of the last inspection. This picture of standards and achievement is reflected across all the small groups of minority ethnic pupils and those at the early stages of learning to speak English. Very good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties enables them to achieve well. Analysis of national and school data is complicated by the change in the designation of the school. In general, the trend in results for mathematics and science has closely followed the gradual national upward trend since 2001. There was significant improvement in mathematics in 2005. In English, the trend has been more variable ranging from above to below average. Standards were above average in 2004 but below in 2005. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection. The school

exceeded its targets in 2005 in mathematics, met them in reading but did not reach them in writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Most parents agree that their children enjoy many aspects of school. This is reflected in pupils' good attendance. Behaviour is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and their social and moral development particularly strong. They contribute thoughtfully in circle time where feelings and concerns are shared with the class. The benefits can be seen in how well the pupils work together and respect the feelings and beliefs of others. As a result, the school is a peaceful place where racial harmony is strong and disagreements are rare. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. Fruit breaks encourage healthy eating and many pupils cycle to school. They participate in a wide range of physical activities. They have good awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship and develop this through a number of appropriate initiatives. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and lifestyles. This is developed well through projects such as 'Tire Tracks'. This uses a satellite internet link for pupils to be kept in touch with a team making a journey across the African continent. Pupils' skills in reading, mathematics, science and ICT prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and this is continuing as new staff and pupils settle in. While inspectors saw some good and outstanding teaching, the impact of teaching on learning over time is satisfactory. In the most effective teaching, questions are used well to assess pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. Teachers use practical, real life situations to promote learning well, for example, in mathematics and science. They also make particularly effective use of ICT to motivate the pupils and stimulate their learning. Where the teaching is satisfactory, activities do not always engage the interest of learners and the pace of learning slows. Teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is good, their progress is monitored regularly and work meets their needs successfully. Teaching assistants provide discrete but very good support and guidance. The teaching and support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are good. The school has made some good progress in developing assessment systems since the last inspection. However, the use of assessment information to build on what pupils already know and can do remains a weakness. The day-to-day outcomes of pupils' learning are not built rigorously or consistently into subsequent learning. Consequently, some pupils are not sufficiently challenged because tasks do not match their capabilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a good curriculum. Pupils say how much they enjoy many subjects but particularly ICT, physical education and the arts. The breadth and variety of after school clubs and two residential visits ensure that pupils have many opportunities for personal and social development. There are also many activities that enable pupils to participate in the arts and sport both within school and in local events and competitions. Pupils have good opportunities to play a musical instrument. There is good support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is very good. The provision for ICT is good and pupils have many opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum. There are several exciting projects that extend pupils' learning in this subject, for example, a link with the Open University. In mathematics and science, pupils have many opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems. Curricular provision is successful in ensuring that pupils enjoy learning, understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and feel safe.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils say that the school is a safe welcoming place. The school ensures that there are good systems to support the considerable number of pupils who enter school other than the normal admission time. Personal, social, health education and citizenship lessons support pupils' personal development well. Circle time provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and concerns. Staff have good understanding of their personal needs so that any problems are quickly sorted out. Health and safety requirements are properly met and child protection procedures are effective.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school judges leadership and management to be good. The inspectors judge it to be satisfactory with some strong features. The headteacher, supported effectively by the senior management and subject leaders, is committed to further improvement. A strong ethos of care and support has been established. The headteacher has facilitated a smooth transition in the re-organisation of the school and has established a cohesive team of teachers, many of whom are new to the school. Arrangements for the release of teachers to plan and prepare their work have been managed very efficiently. School self evaluation is satisfactory. The school has used the outcomes of monitoring well to raise standards in mathematics. However, there has been insufficient rigour in pursuing improvements in other subjects such as writing and in further improvements in teaching and learning. The school improvement plan does not provide sufficient detail to enable teachers and governors to measure the success of key priorities. It does not effectively link planned actions with the expected progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. Governance is good. Governors are committed to the

school and have a good working knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. They play an active role in the construction of the school improvement plan. Link governors monitor the work of the school and the governors' committee structure enables them to consider regular reports from subject leaders. The school's capacity to improve based on the work already achieved since reorganisation is good.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you for the welcome and help you gave us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit very much.

These are the things we liked about your school.\* You are well behaved and told us that you enjoy your lessons and feel safe\* You are very friendly and polite and were keen to tell us about your work \* It was good to see that you all get along well together \* You are good at working on computers and you do well in reading, mathematics and science\* You appreciate the good range of exciting clubs and other after-school activities \* Your headteacher and all the adults who work in school care very much about you and want you to do your best\* The school council gives you good opportunities to tell the teachers how you think things can be made better.

We know that you will want to help your school to improve even more. We think you could do even better with your writing and have asked your teachers to help you more with this. Some of you told us that the work you do is sometimes too easy. We agree with you and have asked your teachers to make sure your work is always interesting and challenging.