



Hurst Drive Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117180
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280006
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Mike Sutton LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hurst Drive
School category	Community		EN8 8DH
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01992624099
Number on roll	270	Fax number	01992622790
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms. Jackie Bruce
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms. Tina Matthews

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hurst Drive Primary School serves a mixed housing residential area of Waltham Cross where social disadvantage is high. The proportions of children entitled to free meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities¹ are well above average. Around a third of children are from ethnic minority groups and around one in five is learning English as an additional language. Both of these proportions are higher than average. When children start in the Reception class their skills and knowledge are below what is typically seen amongst children of this age particularly in social and emotional development and speaking and listening. Many children are admitted or leave during the school year, creating considerable instability in class numbers. Staffing has been stable apart from at senior levels where there has been a period of uncertainty as posts of headteacher and then deputy headteacher were covered for substantial periods by temporary arrangements. The recent appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher has stabilised this aspect of staffing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school provides an acceptable standard of education. However, its view that it is effective is not justified because plans to bring about improvements are recent and are yet to make an impact on standards. In English, mathematics and science, children reach standards that are average but close to being unacceptably low in mathematics. Standards have remained like this for some years and significant numbers of children could do much better, especially in mathematics, which was an issue at the last inspection. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress from low starting points. They make similar progress in Years 1 to 6 but with more drive and higher expectations from teachers and better levels of attendance, children could do better. The school has been much more successful with children's personal development. It has successfully raised the standard of behaviour from unacceptable to satisfactory. Moral and social development is good. Children are well cared for and feel happy and safe at school. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and where improvements are needed. The right measures are now in place to make improvements and there is a strong will to make them work. However until these have a clear effect on raising standards, leadership and management cannot yet be judged satisfactory. Enough has been achieved recently particularly in improving the climate for children to learn, to suggest the school has the means to improve further. The school does not yet give satisfactory value for money. In accordance with the Education Act (2005) Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances could reasonably be expected. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve and significant improvement is required in relation to: the impact of leadership and management in raising standards, particularly in mathematics and improving attendance.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to raise the standards that children reach, the school needs to ensure that: - senior managers check the quality of teaching more frequently, rigorously and effectively. The aim must be for consistently good or better teaching when judged against current criteria. - all key leaders in the school have a better understanding of the data available to the school. They must use this information as part of a system of regularly checking on children's progress, particularly in mathematics and they must take decisive action to improve matters where progress is too slow. - attendance is improved for the minority of children where it is unacceptably low. The school should continue to work with outside agencies and also with parents to reduce the amount of time taken for holidays in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards reached by the end of Year 6 are within the range considered satisfactory but ought to be better. In the Reception class, children make steady progress although

only a small number reach the levels expected for children by the time they start in Year 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is modest and by the end of Year 2 standards are at the low end of satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in remaining year groups continues at an ordinary pace and, by Year 6 standards are no better than satisfactory in English and science and still at the bottom end of satisfactory in mathematics. At no point is there any clear acceleration in children's learning because staff often set their sights too low. The children who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Bi-lingual class assistants are now better trained and give the right sort of help to pupils where it is needed. The school does not yet have a sufficiently good handle on the overall attainment of children from minority ethnic groups because it does not analyse its data in enough detail. Those children who have learning difficulties and disabilities get help within the classroom, which enables them to make satisfactory progress. The school knows that progress should be better and has set itself targets for 2006 and 2007 which are much more demanding and set at the right level. To achieve these targets a concerted drive is needed to raise the quality of teaching from the rather flat levels seen.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory overall with some stronger aspects. There has been a vast improvement on behaviour reflecting the hard work by the school leaders in tackling this problem. Staff now use a consistent approach when handling misbehaviour. The number of exclusions is down and in lessons behaviour is satisfactory and often good. Around school children are polite and friendly to visitors and understand how their behaviour and attitudes affect others. Behaviour still occasionally falters in the playground if supervision is not tight enough or in lessons where work does not arouse enough interest. Moral and social development is good. The children with whom inspectors had discussions were articulate and honest in their views. They feel confident to take any problems to their teachers and know that any incidents of bullying or racism will be dealt with firmly. The school does an adequate job of fostering a sense of wonder and curiosity. However this could be better if lessons consistently had more excitement or innovation to capture children's imagination and make them hungry to learn. Cultural development is satisfactory overall. The great majority of children like coming to school and enjoy the majority of their lessons. They take part readily in all on offer. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Over half the children have attended every day this term, but a significant minority has missed the equivalent of one day a week often through holidays taken during term time. The school works closely with the school nurse or the welfare officer in the most difficult cases, but too much time is still missed by too many children. Most children are careful about their actions and are conscious of the need to take care of themselves and others in all that they do. They have a good attitude to eating healthily and the success of the school's drive on healthy snacks is plainly seen in the range of fruit that children eat at break time. Children support a range of charities and take part in community events. There are good links with the local secondary school and where it can afford to do so, the school makes good use of educational visits. The school council

has made a positive contribution to developing the school community and is prepared to take the initiative. For example, plans for older children to help younger ones at lunchtime were initially not well received by the younger children. So the council asked to speak to the younger classes in assembly to explain what it was trying to do. As a result things improved. Children feel well prepared for the next steps in their education but their weak mathematical skills will be a barrier to future learning unless the school improves this aspect of provision.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's view that teaching is satisfactory is broadly borne out by the inspectors' judgements. However, there is not enough teaching that is consistently good or better. What good teaching was seen was where the teachers held high expectations of what the children could achieve, the lessons were well planned to meet all their individual needs and work moved on at a good pace. As a result the children were responsive and keen to learn. Where teaching was no better than satisfactory, key factors were the lack of pace and drive, and tasks that did not fire the children's imagination. In some instances the quality of teaching slipped further because work was undemanding and pitched at the wrong level. The children with learning difficulties and disabilities get good support in small groups from the team of classroom assistants who have been trained in this work. The teaching of children learning English as an additional language is improving as a result of the measures taken to involve more assistants in helping children understand the work they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The range of work and activities that children undertake is satisfactory. But mathematics is not yet sufficiently well organised to ensure children learn as much as they can. In contrast, the management of information and communication technology has had a very positive effect. The school now has a clear, logical programme of work which children undertake. Good resources are in place and are having an impact on learning. For example, the efficient computerised loan system in the school library has led to a four-fold increase in the numbers of children borrowing books. There is a wide range of after school activities in which many children take part enthusiastically. Good use is made of outside specialists to bring expertise to sports coaching. All this adds significantly to the children's experiences and helps encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The children are well cared for and staff understand their individual personal needs well. Governors have a good oversight of health and safety matters. Arrangements for child protection are in place and staff training for this is regular and ongoing. The school has developed good relations with parents, the large majority of whom are very supportive of the school. It works very closely with parents and outside agencies to provide help and guidance to both children and where appropriate to families. The children in Years 3 to 6 have clear, effective targets to help them understand how to improve their work in English. This is not the case in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school evaluates leadership and management as satisfactory but inspectors judge that it is inadequate. This is because standards in English, science and particularly mathematics have remained static for too long and recent plans for improvement have yet to bear fruit. For example, the leadership team has put in place more robust systems to check on children's progress but the impact of this is yet to be seen in better progress and higher standards. The school has been through a turbulent period of staffing difficulties which has taken time to resolve. The headteacher has worked hard in successfully building a management team and improving collaboration and relationships throughout the school. Regular consultation with parents has improved communications on this front too. The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher have formed a good team and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Behaviour has been largely put right and clear plans are in place to drive standards up. The school is poised to move forward but the pace of change now needs to accelerate. Subject leaders need to grasp the responsibility for raising standards and make full use of the information now available to them on children's progress. Senior staff must ensure teaching is consistently good or better. Governors receive regular training and are improving their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses through frequent feedback from the headteacher and visits to see the school in action. They are especially pleased with recent improvements in behaviour, relationships with parents and teamwork. They are working closely to help the school and now need to re-double efforts to help raise standards. The school has shown it understands what it needs to do and in a number of areas such as improving children's behaviour and strengthening team work, the newly formed senior leadership team has made improvements. Enough has been done to suggest that there is the capacity to improve but the full impact of leadership and management needs to be seen in improving children's progress and raising standards.

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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?	4	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Thank you for the help you gave to all the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really appreciated your friendliness, politeness and the way you helped look after us. What you told us about your school was very helpful. We would now like to tell you what we think as well. We know from what you told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you find most lessons interesting. We can see that behaviour is much better than it used to be and that you get along well together most of the time. Your school council is working well to help make more improvements to the school. We think the idea of older children helping younger ones at lunchtime is a really good one. Your teachers take good care of you and we know from what you told us that you feel safe and have someone to turn to if you have a problem. You told us that any incidents of bad behaviour in the playground, such as bullying are quickly dealt with. We agree with all you told us. We also think you have a very good range of clubs to go to after school and that you really enjoy these. Your teachers work hard to help you learn but we think you could do better in mathematics. We also think that you could do a bit more exciting work in some of your lessons. We were really pleased to see that most of you have not missed a single day so far this term. But we were disappointed to see that quite a few of you miss a bit too much school. We think your headteacher and her staff have a very good idea of how to make your school even better. We know they have the right ideas to make this happen and are ready to get cracking. We are sure you will all work together to succeed. We will come back in about a year to see how you are getting on.