

Halstow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100130
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	285722
Inspection date	27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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 on roll	
School	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mick Armson
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Whitehead
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2002
School address	Halstow Road Greenwich London SE10 0LD
Telephone number	020 8858 2767
Fax number	020 8858 5101

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most of its type. More pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds than found in most schools, but very few of them are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils begin the school with a range of skills that is similar to that found nationally. The school holds the following awards: Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School, Arts Mark Gold, Inclusion Mark and two DfES Achievement Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils' achievement in academic work and personal development is outstanding. Most parents share this view and many wrote in praise of the school's work. 'This is a fantastic school - we are so lucky to have it locally' and 'We cannot speak highly enough of the school and the staff under the headteacher's leadership' are just two of a large number of very favourable reviews.

Pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Writing has been a focus during the last two years and intensive work has borne rich fruit. For example, one Year 6 pupil, posing as a combatant at the Battle of Bosworth Field, wrote in a diary, 'As I sit here in my dark and lonely bedchamber, feeling isolated and cut off from the rest of the world, I try to convince myself that I did my part on the battlefield yesterday.' This work typifies the exciting and outstanding curriculum which the school plans, so that pupils draw together their skills and knowledge in different subjects. This enthuses them to produce work of high quality on a regular basis and is evidence of the outstanding teaching across the school. As a result, standards are above expectations in other subjects such as ICT, art and music. The school plans to enrich the curriculum further by the introduction of a modern foreign language in all year groups. Children in the Foundation Stage get an excellent start to their schooling. Staff make the best use of the small accommodation and pupils are enabled to reach above average standards by the time they move to Year 1.

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. They say they feel very safe in the school, 'especially with the new gates' as one observed. This is because procedures for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Pupils' progress is tracked in great detail to give a quick response to any who might be falling behind. One parent put it, 'We are aware of how the whole team works with dedication, enthusiasm and creativity to provide the best learning opportunities and all round experience for all children.'

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher and deputy work as one to give a clear direction, which all staff follow enthusiastically. Management is shared across the school and leaders at all levels reflect the dedication and effectiveness demonstrated by senior leaders. Governors play an outstanding part in planning, evaluating and challenging the work of the school. The school has an excellent capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no major issues to address because of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. The following issue is a priority in the current school learning and development plan:

- Plan for the introduction of a modern foreign language across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children begin in Reception with average skills and, by the time they begin Year 1, most have reached and many have exceeded the goals expected of them. By Year 2, standards are consistently significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make excellent progress throughout the school and reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. There was a slight dip in the standards reached

in the Year 6 writing tests in 2006, though records show that this was not so in pupils' day-to-day work. However, the school has worked successfully to strengthen pupils' use of purpose and structure in their writing and current standards are very high. The measure of pupils' progress in 2006 was in the top five per cent of schools nationally and pupils are on course to meet their very challenging targets in the forthcoming national tests. Boys and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve better than their national counterparts and no groups underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school enormously. This was clear when all the pupils in Years 5 and 6 sang and danced two songs from the musical Joseph. Their enthusiasm was evident and the quality of performance and ensemble was very good. Pupils' attendance is above average. They know that a healthy lifestyle is important 'because it helps you concentrate more'. They say they are safe in school and that any bullying that may occur is dealt with well by adults.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. Their behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, not only those on the school council. Pupils are keen that the school's weekly newsletter should be printed on recycled paper and 'Roving Reporters' write every week about pupils' ideas and opinions. These have a real impact on the curriculum, such as the current emphasis on food technology at their request. Pupils value differences in background and belief. One young child said, 'If you want to, you can be you'. An older pupil put it more maturely: 'If everyone thought the same you would have no freedom or individuality.' The ability to express their opinions together with high standards in basic skills prepare pupils excellently for the next stages in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers create excellent learning environments in their rooms by skilful use of pupils' work and a range of artefacts in striking displays. This makes pupils want to learn and it is clear that it works. Pupils' learning is excellent because teachers harness pupils' interests in planning work. Reception children were using a book they love, *Handa's Surprise*. All activities stemmed from this, including stepping stones outside across 'the river' for children to practise their balance, carrying a basket on their heads. In Year 6, pupils' skills in calculating angles were refined, with much enjoyment, by a computer program called *Kung Fu Angles*, on the interactive whiteboard.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it is planned in detail to make links between subjects and pupils' interests. The huge amount of high quality pupils' work on display all through the school is evidence of the success of this. The effectiveness of recent initiatives to develop pupils' writing is evident in all classes, from the excellent redrafting work seen in Years 3 and 4 to this example of imaginative writing seen in Year 4: 'Cautiously, John took a few steps

closer and closer to what he could only imagine being a vortex, the void, a portal through time...'. Visits are used effectively to add realism to learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were studying compound words, such as drawbridge, based around their visit the previous day to Leeds Castle. Although the accommodation for the Reception classes is small, staff make the best use of it so that it places no restrictions on children's learning and development. Spanish is currently being introduced in certain classes and there are plans to extend it to the whole school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Procedures to safeguard them exceed statutory requirements and are diligently carried out. Parents praise highly the school's work for their children. One wrote, 'Halstow is a school that creates an excellent learning environment. It has a supportive ethos and children are taught to share this ethos in their relationships with their peers.' Frequent events, such as the forthcoming Arts Festival, enable pupils to deepen their understanding of their own and other cultures. The use of assessment data to promote pupils' progress is excellent. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very good and contributes effectively to their well developed abilities to revise and improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher gives an absolutely clear and firm lead which all staff follow consistently. This produces a harmonious, hard-working school which has its sights clearly fixed on the maintenance of excellence. Governors possess a wide range of professional skills between them which they use well for the benefit of the pupils. They have reorganised their working to ensure that they scrutinise and evaluate the school's work, offering a good degree of challenge which has resulted in the sharpening of many areas of practice. This means that the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is outstanding. The school is justifiably very popular in the locality and the response of parents to the questionnaire was extremely positive. One parent summed up the feelings expressed by many: 'A wonderful school. It makes me very happy sending my daughter to such a well rounded environment.'

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

8 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halstow Primary School, Halstow Road, Greenwich, London, SE10 0LD

Thank you for the friendly and polite way you welcomed me to your school at the end of last month. I enjoyed my day and the chance to meet so many of you. I asked some of you about special things you would always remember about Halstow. One person told me of how proud she had been of a model snail she had made years ago in the Reception class. One of the things I will remember about Halstow is the exciting performance of two songs which Year 5 and 6 pupils put on for me. I could hear every word.

A large number of your parents wrote to tell me how much they value your school. Many of them told me that Halstow is an excellent school and I agree. It is giving you an outstanding education. You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science and do well in other subjects too, as all the very good art work round the school shows.

Halstow is such an outstanding school because all of you - adults and pupils - work very hard to make it so. Your behaviour is excellent and you learn to express your opinions clearly and explain your thinking. You try to keep healthy and safe and know why it is important. All the adults work well to make sure you are safe and that you make as much progress in learning as you can.

The teaching you receive is outstanding and you told me how much you enjoy lessons. Your headteacher and her staff work very hard to make sure that the school continues to do the best it can for you. One of the new things they are planning is about teaching you Spanish. I agree with them that this is one of the next things to be done.

I hope you continue to do so well and to enjoy your time at Halstow.

Yours sincerely

Christopher GrayInspector