

Howard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101725
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	286163
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr J Gooding MBE
Headteacher	Mr J Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2003
School address	Dering Place Croydon CR0 1DT
Telephone number	020 8688 4216
Fax number	020 8688 2199

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average-size primary school in a deprived area of outer south London. It educates a high number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average with Turkish, Polish, Somali, Tamil, and Urdu being the most common first languages. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. The Deputy Headteacher has achieved BT London Teacher of the Year 2005. The school works closely with Mulberry Bush, a charitable group which shares the school site providing nursery as well as before-and after-school provision for primary age children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school where all staff are working very hard to ensure pupils are happy and well cared for. Their well-being is at the centre of the school's determination to raise pupils' self-confidence and self-belief. This contributes considerably to the good behaviour that typifies school life and helps pupils to make good progress. Care, guidance and support are good. Class teachers and other staff know their pupils well and ensure their personal needs are met. The school has very strong links with other agencies and these contribute significantly to the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. As a result of very effective systems to encourage pupils to attend regularly, attendance has improved over recent years and is well above the national average.

Attainment on entry to the school is below average and pupils' social and emotional skills are often weak. The school enables most pupils to exceed national averages by the end of Year 6 and their personal development is excellent. Effective teaching in Reception begins this process well. Good achievement continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 because the school assesses needs well and has adjusted its teaching to meet pupils' requirements. The tracking of academic progress is also good, although marking does not consistently make clear to pupils how to improve their work. The school provides effective specialised help for those with learning difficulties and disabilities or for those learning English as an additional language. Consequently, these pupils make excellent progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Pace is generally strong and in many, though not all, lessons staff plan tasks which actively involve all pupils. As a result teaching and learning are generally good. However, a minority of lessons lack the pace and fine selection of engaging activities that is evident in the very best. This usually stems from a more narrow style of questioning that involves a minority of pupils so that the pace of learning slows. The curriculum is good overall, providing a range of experiences for pupils in lessons and through enrichment activities outside the classroom.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to work in teams and are enthusiastic to take on responsibility. Pupils enjoy school very much. They are confident they have an influence through the school council and speak with enthusiasm and at length about the changes the school has made in response to their suggestions.

Many parents praise the school. One said, 'We couldn't ask for a better school'. It is popular in the local community and is heavily oversubscribed. The Parents Association has been relaunched and is working closely with the school and School Council to raise funds and support further enhancement of the school's resources.

The headteacher and deputy make a strong team who initiate and drive improvement with a clear and shared vision for the school. This is being sustained despite a period of long-term absence through illness. As a result of good leadership and management, pupils who start school with below average attainment achieve well and make outstanding gains in their personal development. The issues from the last inspection have been well tackled showing the school has a good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve lesson planning so that all pupils are actively involved in their learning.
- Make more effective use of marking so that pupils know how to make their work better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Improvements to planning, the curriculum and use made of outside areas in Reception help pupils to make good progress so that most children are close to the expected goals and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen rapidly as a result of monitoring and improvements to teaching and standards at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were above average overall. The school continues to improve and pupils are currently on course to achieving above average standards. Progress in lessons is good in all year groups so that, by Year 6 pupils have acquired secure skills. Results in 2006 were above average in science and broadly average in mathematics and English. The percentages of pupils achieving higher levels were above average in reading, science and mathematics but lower in writing. The school has responded well to this and has rightly prioritised developing writing skills throughout the school. Present standards in Year 6 are broadly average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make outstanding progress because they are given work which matches their needs and have good additional support from teaching assistants and outside agencies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their social, moral and emotional development is excellent as the welcoming and friendly atmosphere throughout the school reflects. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils' commitment to a healthy lifestyle is outstanding and healthy eating and physical exercise are very actively promoted and supported. Pupils understand how to keep safe. Their contribution to the school community is outstanding. Pupils, parents and staff are involved in making changes to the school. The very effective school council includes pupils from every class including Reception. Older pupils help the younger children to contribute to decision making. They are very keen to take on secretarial, financial and organisational roles which are good preparation for later life. Pupils thrive on these responsibilities and their self-esteem grows. New toilets, changes to the dining arrangements, a playground 'buddy bench', recycling systems, fundraising and projects with the Parents' Association are good examples of what the pupils have achieved. Pupils are proud of their school and sing the school song with enthusiasm. Certificates and medals awarded for very good attendance and punctuality are highly prized by all pupils, motivating them to attend very well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy their learning and say that teachers make lessons fun. Teachers identify and share clear learning aims which give lessons a good sense of purpose and contribute to pace. Engaging learning activities catch and keep the pupils' interests: for example, using construction kits and pencils to learn about different angles in mathematics. In some lessons opportunities are missed to encourage or sustain the participation of all learners. In these lessons pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and have more limited opportunities to work with others and to discuss their learning with partners. Committed

teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and help pupils with learning difficulties to make excellent progress. Teachers generally work hard to match work to pupils' needs using the school's assessment data. However, planning the next steps in learning is not always consistent for pupils capable of reaching higher levels. Behaviour in lessons is usually very good although a minority of pupils are less well settled when they are not being taught by their usual class teacher.

Teaching in the Reception draws a good balance between activities directed by adults and good opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop their interests.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and prioritises literacy, numeracy and personal development. Support for those pupils learning English as an additional language ensures they are included well, as are those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and this leads to their very good progress. Opportunities for pupils to develop their computing skills in school are enhanced through links with a local secondary school. Music, as well as swimming for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are good features. Visits to local places of interest, cultural events and a wide range of visitors to the school enrich the curriculum well. The school runs a number of extra-curricular clubs including country dancing. Through links with local primary schools, pupils in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6 have had opportunities to develop their writing skills. However, opportunities for more able pupils to develop their interests more widely are not firmly established.

In Reception, the curriculum is carefully planned to take account of the children's specific interests and, as a result, children make good progress. For example, children were enjoying planting flower seeds and garden centre role-play because their interest in 'growing' had been sparked by the headteacher's assembly on potato plants.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support for pupils are effective in helping pupils make good progress. Achievements are celebrated frequently and the school successfully prioritises developing pupils' self-esteem. Systems to track progress and pass on information about pupils' learning are effective. As a result, adults know how to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak languages other than English at home, so that they make outstanding progress. Individual targets at the front of exercise books help pupils to focus on what they need to do in writing and mathematics. Marking gives good feedback on strengths but does not systematically make clear what the next steps are for improvement. The parents overwhelming support for the school reflects the school's support for parents as well as its care for the children. Increasing links with the on-site Nursery are helping both schools work together for the benefit of the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's belief that everyone in the school community matters is a strong motivation for his enthusiastic, hardworking staff. He sets a challenging agenda that is successfully raising achievement, as shown by the improvements in

the end of Year 2 results. With the support of the talented deputy, the headteacher has created an effective and united team. Together with middle managers, they lead with a clear sense of direction and determination to help all pupils achieve their best. Useful monitoring has been undertaken by the headteacher, but this is not always systematic enough to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, although the school views itself modestly in judging pupil's personal development and well-being because they are always striving to do better and are confident that they can. Funding is well managed, with any surplus put to effective use, such as increased support for those with learning difficulties and imaginative enhancement of school facilities, such as creating new rooms in the roof space. The governing body has a sound grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howard Primary School, Croydon, CR0 1DT

I am writing to thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school recently. You were delightfully friendly and I enjoyed talking with you very much. I also particularly enjoyed hearing you all sing the Howard Primary School song with such enthusiasm: you are rightly proud of 'the things you do'. I found lots of good things about your school.

You are happy at school and talk about it with pride. Your parents like the school very much too. You take very little time off school. You carry out jobs and tasks in a grown-up way, for example through the school council. Your school council is effective and the school has got better as a result of your suggestions. Those who find learning hard have lots of extra help and do very well. The school has a very good headteacher and deputy headteacher who get good support from other staff. All the staff care very much and work hard for you to feel safe and do well.

Some of the teaching is really good but not all lessons are as good as the best, so I have asked that the school helps to make sure that they are. This will include making sure that teachers give you more ideas about how to improve your work when they mark your books.

I left your school confident that it will continue to improve. I can clearly see why your families are pleased with the school and are proud of your progress. Howard Primary is a good school.

Thank you again. Keep on working hard and being happy at school.

Yours sincerely,

Madeleine Gerard (Lead inspector)