



Houndsfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102011
Local Authority Enfield
Inspection number 286243
Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007
Reporting inspector Kath Beck

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ripon Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		N9 7RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8804 4938
Number on roll (school)	500	Fax number	020 8804 4939
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Roger Gow
		Headteacher	Mr James Shearly
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Houndsfield is a large primary school with a nursery for 60 children who attend part-time. Most pupils come from minority ethnic groups; one quarter of the pupils is of Turkish origin. A few come from asylum seeking, refugee or traveller backgrounds. Many pupils speak English as an additional language, but only 13 are at the early stages of learning English. Over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, a very high proportion. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is much higher than in other schools. There is a resources base for infant pupils with speech and language difficulties, but only two pupils from the school are on roll. The number of pupils starting and leaving the school at other than the usual times is very high. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Since his appointment in September 2006 the headteacher has brought significant changes to the school and its provision. He has secured a clear sense of direction for the school and staff are committed to raising standards. Improvements have been made recently to the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour, so that parents have full confidence in the school. However, recent initiatives have had little impact on pupils' achievements, which are poor. This is because the curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, and elements of leadership and management, including the role of the governors, are inadequate. The school identified most of these significant weaknesses in its recent self evaluation and is aware that its overall effectiveness is inadequate and that it gives unsatisfactory value for money.

Consequently, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Since the school's last inspection in 2002, standards have declined and are very low because pupils do not have sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to perform adequately in national tests. Efforts to improve standards in English had some success in 2006, but pupils' attainment remained low. Little has been done in recent years to stop the decline in mathematics and science. The main reason for these low standards and pupils' poor achievements is the lack of good teaching to enhance the rate of pupils' learning. There are pockets of good practice, and teachers with specific expertise are being used to coach colleagues and raise their skills. However, too much teaching is just satisfactory or inadequate. In particular, teachers' expectations of what pupils are to learn and complete in each lesson are too low. Teachers know the targets pupils are intended to achieve, including those pupils with English as an additional language or with learning difficulties and disabilities, but do not always take these into account fully when planning their lessons. Teachers do not take sufficient responsibility for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities or those with English as an additional language. Pupils in the resource base for speech and language difficulties make good progress.

Pupils' health and welfare needs are cared for well and their personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils new to the school, especially those from other countries, settle in quickly. Pupils know how to stay safe and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. There is a harmonious atmosphere and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good. Satisfactory provision ensures that children make adequate progress in the Foundation Stage. They make a good start in their personal, social and emotional development. However, when they go into Year 1, their standards are well-below those expected nationally because of their low starting points.

In January 2007, the headteacher, staff and governors agreed the aims and values of the school. Senior leaders and middle managers now know their responsibilities for

checking the quality of provision in their subjects. However, many, including the governors, do not yet have sufficient skills and expertise to monitor and evaluate the impact of the curriculum and the quality of teaching on pupils' achievements rigorously. Curriculum planning is not ensuring there is a balanced provision across the school to enable pupils to build up their knowledge skills and understanding year on year. In addition, teachers do not always make the best use of time so pupils do not cover enough ground in their lessons.

Progress since the last inspection has been poor. The required improvements in the quality of teaching, use of time and monitoring and evaluation of curriculum policies have not been achieved. Despite the appointment of a strong headteacher, the school does not demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- increase pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in mathematics and science to raise standards
- improve the quality of teaching. In particular, raise teachers' expectations and ensure they take full responsibility for the learning of all pupils in their class
- develop the skills of senior leaders, managers and governors in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and its impact on pupils' achievements
- review the curriculum, including the use of time available to teach it, to ensure pupils achieve as much as they can from year to year

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school recognises that most pupils underachieve and that standards are very low at the end Year 2 and Year 6. They have fallen since the last inspection. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils know and can do are too low. Results in mathematics and science have declined significantly because teachers' subject knowledge is weak, and the curriculum takes too little account of how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding should be built up year on year. This means pupils have a lot of ground to make up. Results in English improved last year as the school received significant support from a consultant. While pupils' skills in written and spoken English have improved, few write with a fluent joined script. Except in English, teachers do not make sufficient checks on pupils' learning and the work set is often inappropriate. Pupils do not always meet the targets they are set. Teaching assistants support groups of pupils appropriately. However, few teachers use the targets provided by the English as an additional language or special educational needs coordinators to plan work that meets pupils' differing needs in lessons, and this holds back their achievement.

When pupils start school in the Nursery their language and social skills are often poor. An emphasis on developing these skills throughout the Foundation Stage is successful, although few pupils meet the Early Learning Goals set for them at the age of five.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good. Members of the school council, playtime and friendship leaders carry out their work effectively. Pupils hold firm views about justice and fair play and these factors contribute well to creating an orderly community where their ideas are valued. Recent consultations with the pupils have proved successful in improving behaviour, especially in the playground, so that it is satisfactory. Temporary exclusions have also been reduced as a result of the consistent application of the new behaviour policy and support from the learning mentor. Pupils from all different backgrounds respect the diversity of cultures within the school, helping new pupils with little experience of schooling to settle quickly.

Most pupils are polite, friendly and courteous. They enjoy taking part in a range of activities organised for them before and after school and during their lunch break, especially those that promote a healthy lifestyle such as running. While some pupils enjoy lessons, a significant number find it difficult to concentrate when they are kept too long on the carpet, the pace of lessons is slow or the content does not capture their interest. Work in pupils' books lacks pride in its presentation and shows little has been completed in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory.

Recent improvements to pupils' skills in English and information and communication technology are beginning to support some pupils appropriately for later life and learning. One pupil said that it was important to learn mathematics because 'when you are out shopping you need to know how much change you will have from the ten-pound note', but too many pupils have significant ground to make up in mathematics and science before they can become lifelong learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Since his appointment, the headteacher has been successful in raising the performance of some teachers. He has used the best teachers, who do not have responsibility for classes, to model good lessons and coach colleagues. Relationships with the pupils are mostly good and behaviour is managed effectively. However there is not enough good teaching to capture pupils' interest and sustain motivation. There are instances of unsatisfactory teaching that hold back pupils' progress. They underachieve, and do not make up lost ground. The main weaknesses are linked to low expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and in their written work. Teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure. In part this is because the programmes of work offer too little guidance about how pupils' learning is to be built up each year. Teachers do not take sufficient account of advice from colleagues about what pupils need to learn next, or use information from assessment accurately when planning their lessons. This means the needs of different groups of pupils are not met consistently and they underachieve.

The school has recruited additional teaching assistants to support pupils, but they are too new to have had a significant impact.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory because teachers plan tasks that are interesting and fun. Children are helped to settle quickly and learn social and communication skills effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The variety of before and after school clubs, lunchtime activities, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are good and promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is a strong emphasis on physical education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. That said, the curriculum lacks breadth and balance. Few teachers are clear about what is to be taught and when, to ensure pupils build up their knowledge and skills consistently as they move through the school. The school has identified this issue and is taking steps to address it. A curriculum leader has been appointed to monitor and evaluate, along with subject leaders, the quality of programmes of work in each subject and their impact on pupils' achievements. This action is too new and has so far had little impact. Time set aside for the curriculum is not used well. Time is also wasted when lessons do not start on time.

The Foundation Stage curriculum ensures there is a relevant range of interesting topics that children enjoy, although there are not enough opportunities for them to use their initiative.

Staff responsible for coordinating the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, learning difficulties or disabilities and more able pupils offer clear guidance to teachers about the needs of these pupils. Often this guidance is good, but teachers do not implement it consistently in their lessons, and this reduces its impact on pupils' achievements. Provision to support the needs of pupils with speech and language difficulties is good and helps them to make good progress within the resource area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Adults provide good pastoral care and support for all pupils. The youngest pupils and those who enter the school at other than the usual times are inducted well. They settle quickly into school routines and are helped to make friends. Pupils who start at the school speaking very little English are assessed in their own language and this helps to establish what they know and can do so that appropriate support can be arranged for them. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they know who to go to if they want help or have a problem. Child protection and health and safety procedures are thorough. Risk assessments for school visits and procedures for monitoring health and safety are managed well. The appointment of a learning mentor is leading to improvements in pupils' behaviour.

The school has an appropriate system for tracking pupils' progress, but this is not used effectively enough to raise standards and plan work to meet precise needs in lessons.

Marking of work is weak as it gives pupils' too little information about how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The newly appointed headteacher is very experienced and skilled in leading and managing schools in challenging circumstances. Since his appointment, staff have been brought together as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. However, most senior managers are new to their roles and do not yet have the skills to monitor and evaluate the work of the school rigorously enough. The headteacher's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is mostly accurate, as the areas in need of most urgent improvement have been identified. It has been made clear to staff what needs to be done to bring about change. Determined action has been taken, especially with regard to improving the quality of teaching, but this has yet to make an impact on pupils' achievements.

Governors meet regularly and are now aware of the improvements needed, from the headteacher's recent report and evaluation. Governors have not been involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school sufficiently to hold it to account for its low standards and pupils' poor achievements. Consequently, the school does not demonstrate the capacity to improve significantly.

Parents recognise and praise the improvements made by the headteacher in the short time he has been at the school.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed listening to your views and opinions that were very helpful. I am writing to tell you about our findings. The adults look after you well and you told us that you have helped to make changes to the school because the teachers listen to you. Your ideas about friendship monitors and play leaders have been successful in making playtimes happy. The youngest children settle into school quickly and soon learn how to behave properly and you know how to keep safe and to be healthy. You enjoy the African drumming and other activities that are provided for you.

Your new headteacher is determined to make the school much better so that you learn a lot more. He has agreed with all the teachers the ways in which they can work together to help you to do really well, but there is a lot to do to make sure that you know all the things you need to know and understand by the time you leave the school. We looked at your work and tests results and found that you do better in English than in mathematics and science, but you do not do as well as many children in other schools. We have asked the teachers to make sure that the programmes of work, especially in mathematics and science, improve your knowledge and skills each year. We have also asked them to ensure that their lessons help all of you to make as much progress as you can every day. The headteacher, senior teachers and governors are going to check often that your lessons and the work you are doing are helping you to do as well as you can. We have placed the school in special measures as it needs a lot of help to improve.

Thank you again for your assistance. Your teachers really want to make the school better and you can help by completing more work in each lesson and taking pride in presenting it neatly.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck Lead Inspector