



Heelands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110382
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 288652
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Jeffrey White

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Glovers Lane
School category	Community		Heelands
Age range of pupils	4–7		Milton Keynes MK13 7QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 316306
Number on roll (school)	81	Fax number	01908 225634
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sandy McAlear
		Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Barnard
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–7	12–13 September 2006	288652

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional inspector

Description of the school

Almost 70% of pupils are of White British background. The remaining pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils of Black African origin form the largest group, but are relatively small in number. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The school has very recently changed its character from a First school to an Infant school and is now much smaller than it was. The headteacher has only been at the school since the beginning of the current term.

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 school that has improved quickly and has a good capacity to improve further. It has coped well with the challenges posed by its very recent change of character and after a period of interim leadership. The new headteacher has inherited measures for improving pupils' standards and achievement that are proving to be successful. Good monitoring of pupils' performance has resulted in effective action to raise standards. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school because the teaching is effective. Standards have risen and are continuing to rise; they are now average overall and are better than this in some aspects of pupils' work. Standards are higher in reading than in mathematics and writing. Although targets in writing have helped standards to rise, they are not used in mathematics. Teachers assess pupils' performance conscientiously but they are not always accurate in assessing the most able pupils' writing. The Foundation Stage provides a good start to the children's education and they make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good and the headteacher, governors and staff value pupils' cultural and ethnic diversity. The school is a safe and harmonious community in which pupils feel happy and are well cared for. Pupils are also enjoying how to stay healthy. The climate for learning is therefore conducive to fostering pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils contribute positively to the community and know how to care for the environment. They are stimulated by a good curriculum not only in the core subjects but also especially in art and design, and design and technology. Pupils respond particularly well to learning how to work with others and to opportunities to make their own choices. They also enjoy having a say, for example, some pupils interviewed the new headteacher prior to her appointment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by setting targets for individual pupils' progress.
- Ensure appropriate criteria are used to mark able pupils' writing more accurately.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and attain average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement across the school is good. Standards have improved significantly in the core subjects and are now average overall in Years 1 and 2. Work in scientific enquiry is above average in Year 2. Precise targets in literacy are helping standards to rise. Standards in mathematics have risen, but not as much as in literacy. This is mainly because improving literacy has been a particular focus for raising standards. Pupils talk confidently about their work in subjects generally and use a good range of vocabulary. There is some very good work in art and design. In lessons, the most able pupils achieve well because good teaching ensures their work is challenging. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2 they worked confidently at an above average level. The raising of boys' self esteem has helped to narrow the gap in

gender performance. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as all other pupils in the school. Ethnic minority pupils also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils throughout the school respond well to the good opportunities for their personal development. Pupils talk confidently about how they can turn to an adult for help if they have a problem. Behaviour is good and relationships are positive. One child commented, 'We try to help each other'. Pupils appreciate the range of physical activities that are helping to improve their health, and they have good knowledge of healthy foods. They enjoy their work. For instance, they have a particularly keen interest in art and design. Pupils' involvement in a recycling project is a good example of them contributing to the community. Basic literacy and numeracy skills and personal qualities are developed well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the headteacher and staff especially value the school's ethnic and cultural diversity. The attendance rate is below average but the school works well to improve it. The most recent figures indicate that there is no unauthorised absence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because they ensure that pupils achieve well. An effective feature of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is the promotion of children's personal and social development so that they learn to work with others and alone. In lessons in Years 1 and 2 learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Discussion of how far the objectives have been met helps pupils to be aware of their progress. Personal development is fostered well and pupils work in a safe and stimulating environment. Lesson plans are implemented effectively. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy cooperating with others. Throughout the school teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to talk about their work and to use appropriate vocabulary. Pupils' work is marked sensitively and the marking suggests how it could improve. Assessment of the most able pupils' writing is not always accurate so they are therefore not as sure of their progress as they might be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a good curriculum that is enhanced well by a good range of extra-curricular activities. It meets requirements and responds well to the needs of the community. Improved target-setting in literacy has helped the curriculum to meet pupils' needs by building on their prior attainment but individual targets are not used in this way in mathematics. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their financial

skills, for example, pupils in the school council had to consider costs when deciding on new playground equipment. Good provision in the Foundation Stage contributes well to the children's progress in the areas of learning, for instance, in working on their own or with others. The use of specialists to teach art and design and music is especially effective. Good links are made between subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils used ICT software creatively to produce very good portraits. Regular sporting activities help pupils to stay healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the good care, guidance and support. The teachers are well established and have warm relationships with pupils and their families. This contributes well to pupils' progress in their work and to their personal confidence. Parents feel their children are happy and safe. Pupils talk well about being looked after. Their personal development is promoted effectively. Health and safety are well catered for. Child protection procedures are thorough and looked-after pupils receive appropriate monitoring and support. Good links are made with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties. Non-teaching staff relate well to pupils, for example, at lunchtimes. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Guidance for pupils in their work is generally effective. Marking is sensitive and helps pupils to improve. The most able pupils are not always made sufficiently aware of their progress in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have helped the school to improve quickly over the last two years. As a result, the new headteacher has inherited a clear direction for the school and thorough procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The evaluation has highlighted where improvements are needed and has resulted in effective action to raise standards, for example in pupils' writing. The new headteacher has made a good start and already implemented improvements to the provision in the Foundation Stage. The commitment to improving the school further is strong and supported by the governors and staff. The school is inclusive, and minority ethnic pupils do well. Governors support the school well and meet their responsibilities. They have relatively recently improved their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Very recent improvements to the dand;eacute;cor and fabric of the school building have contributed very positively to pupils' learning.

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	3
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	2

Personal development and well-being

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

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.

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	2
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

Thank you for your help when I visited your school. Your school is good. I enjoyed talking to you and you told me how happy you are and how much you enjoy what you do. You make good progress because your teachers and other adults in the school teach you well. You behave well and are learning how to work by yourselves and with others. You are also learning how to be healthy. You have made your new headteacher feel welcomed. I enjoyed looking at the photographs of interesting work you have done. You are using targets to help you make progress in literacy and I think you could now have targets to help you in mathematics. Your teachers will also be looking at ways to mark your writing to help you know how much you are improving.

With best wishes,

Jeff White,

Lead inspector.