



Prior Heath Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125028
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293168
Inspection date 8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Prior Road
School category	Community		Camberley
Age range of pupils	4-7		GU15 1DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01276 25546
Number on roll (school)	171	Fax number	01276 675450
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr H Mason
		Headteacher	Mrs H Allan
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school and most of the children who join the Reception year have had some form of pre-school experience. The school admits most of its pupils from the surrounding area and they come from generally advantaged backgrounds. The large majority are of White British heritage and other pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than that of most schools. The school has links with a local technology college and with other schools in the area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve extremely well at this outstanding school. Standards are, and have been for many years, high because of excellent teaching and strong leadership. The school assessed all aspects of the school as effective, although it is better than this. Its modest evaluations reflect the very high expectations of the headteacher, staff and governors and the continuous process of improvement that drives the school forward. Outstanding leadership and management have guided the school very well since its last inspection.

Children start the school with above average skills and make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage because of the high quality of provision there. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching continues to be excellent and is never less than good. Teachers plan work that stimulates enthusiasm for learning and is well matched to pupils' needs so that, whatever their ability or starting points, they make rapid progress.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high by the end of Year 2, but fewer pupils reach higher levels in science. The school has begun to refine assessment in science. However, there is still more to do to ensure assessments are used better to plan work for those of higher ability.

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being helps them to mature into courteous and confident young people. They show caring attitudes to each other and excellent behaviour. Pupils reflect very well on moral and spiritual themes, such as respecting other views and beliefs. They thrive on opportunities to become school councillors and are confident that the staff will act on their ideas like, 'Painting the dull gate and fence to make it look nicer'. Pupils value the work they do in the community at harvest time and through charitable fund raising.

An excellent curriculum provides a rich variety of indoor and outdoor experiences so pupils enjoy school very much, one commented, 'Our school is great because you do lots of interesting things'. The high standard of art and writing they produce is beautifully displayed, demonstrating how well their efforts and achievements are valued. Special topics, themed weeks, visits and visitors help pupils to learn about other cultures and customs in the wider world.

Close links with other schools and a local technology college provides good support and training opportunities for the staff, including innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. The excellent progress pupils make in basic skills, including ICT, prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their education.

The guidance pupils receive about how to achieve their best in lessons is excellent. Teachers provide individual learning targets that help pupils to improve their work. Effective procedures are adopted to care for pupils. These ensure that they are looked after and, whatever their background, are safe from harm or harassment. Healthy living is promoted very well through the many opportunities pupils have to participate in sports and games and daily fruit eating sessions.

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that the school knows its own strengths and what needs to be improved. Its track record in maintaining high standards demonstrate the school's excellent capacity to keep on improving. Governors are highly effective and a real asset to the school. Parents feel very involved because the school regularly seeks their views and those of the pupils. This accounts for the high level of satisfaction expressed by parents, one summing up the views of many, 'I am very happy that we managed to get a place in such a lovely infant school'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the way teachers assess pupils' progress in science to help them plan work that accelerates the progress of higher ability pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are high. The pupils work very hard and achieve extremely well. The large majority of children entering the Foundation Stage start school with knowledge and skills that are in advance of those expected for their age. Throughout their time in the Reception year, they are provided with very stimulating teaching and outstanding all round care. This ensures that by the time they start Year 1, they reach standards that are well above those expected in all areas of learning. In the rest of the school, consistently strong and effective teaching continues so the pupils reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. These high standards have been maintained since the school's last inspection because the school sets challenging targets. However, there is scope for further improvement in science. The school recognises that the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in science is relatively lower than other subjects and should be higher.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

High attendance rates reflect the pupils' enjoyment of school, as one commented, 'My school is fantastic, you make lots of friends and learn lots of things'. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future by receiving a very good grounding in basic skills. They develop strong friendships and understand how to help others. The school council enables pupils to have a say in school improvements, confident that the school will consider their views and ideas. Pupils learn to appreciate others and reflect during thought provoking assemblies about being special and accepting that everyone has something to offer. Pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and enthusiastically take part in sporting, musical and creative arts activities that successfully develop self-confidence, talent and skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because there is a strong emphasis on tolerance and awareness of others. This is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and their appreciation of the variety of cultures and backgrounds represented across the school and in the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve extremely well because of outstanding teaching. They enjoy their lessons because teachers have high expectations and give pupils interesting work. Teachers use assessment information about the pupils' performance very well to build on what they already know and understand. However, there is scope for improvement in science, where some pupils of higher ability could do better. Teachers plan work that builds on previous learning and provides clear success criteria and targets for the pupils to reach. In an outstanding English lesson, pupils in Year 2 understood what they had to do to improve their writing, and using their knowledge and research of the polar regions, produced story plans. These were adapted to help them construct complex sentences and resulted in high standards of independent and extended writing. The use of interactive white boards enliven the teaching and make learning more engaging. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is excellent and provides a wide range of carefully managed activities that meet the needs of Reception children very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is excellent and is having a very positive effect on both the pupils' academic and personal development. A rich programme includes the creative arts, music and sport, which make learning fun and exciting for the pupils. Highly effective use of problem solving skills in mathematics and extending reading and writing opportunities has successfully maintained high standards. There are excellent links between subjects allowing pupils to apply skills and make sense of their learning. Every opportunity is taken to use the stimulating outdoor areas, even during the recent snowfall, so that the pupils believe learning is, as one said, 'Like an adventure'. Excellent use is made of the local community and of parent and visitors to enrich what is on offer. Extensive use of the creative arts within specially themed weeks and topics, for example, 'Around the World', provide excellent opportunities to learn about different cultures, customs and lifestyles. Pupils talked excitedly about the Chinese dragons they made or how they made Italian pasta, illustrating how the school successfully combines skills from different subjects to make learning tactile, fun and meaningful to all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care and welfare provided for every pupil is very much at the heart of the school. Typical comments from parents sum this up, 'Prior Heath has welcomed my child with open arms and given her confidence to enjoy school', 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds since starting school. He loves school and frequently wants to go at the week-end'. There are consistent systems to encourage excellent behaviour.

Pupils are very safe and secure because staff are vigilant and keep good records of attendance, accidents and medical needs. Academic support and monitoring are excellent. The school has assessment systems that regularly check pupils' progress and are used by teachers to ensure tasks in lessons build on what the pupils have already learned. A good start has been made to refine assessment in science to ensure that pupils of higher ability reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide highly effective leadership. Parents recognise these qualities and think highly of the school, one typical comment summing up the views of many, 'We are delighted with every aspect of Prior Heath School and feel that the headteacher has offered our children the very best start to their education'. The leadership team has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has guided excellent improvements since the school's last inspection. High standards and consistently effective teaching have been maintained, demonstrating no complacency and excellent capacity to continue moving forward. Governors ensure that the staff remain focused on key priorities through accurate self-evaluation and systematic analyses of the school strengths and relative weaknesses.

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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?	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	1
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.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and I enjoyed my day.

Yours is an excellent school and your parents agree.

There are so many good things about your school that it is hard for me to pick out the very best. However, these are what I was pleased with most:

- you are very well behaved and try very hard in lessons
- your teachers are helping you to do very well and you learn to help other pupils
- you enjoy school and reach excellent standards; I really liked your stories, pictures and models that are on display around the school, they are fantastic, well done
- your parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and many parents like to help in school
- the staff take excellent care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy
- your headteacher, staff and governors manage the school very well and work hard to give you extra things to do during and after school, like gardening, games and art.

I have asked your teachers to:

- keep a close check on how you are doing in science so you can do even better.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector