

Heathfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105172
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308786
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Ashton

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Cudlip
Headteacher	Mr Steve Linahan (Acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 1999
School address	Henniker Road Bolton Lancashire BL3 3TP
Telephone number	01204 333595
Fax number	01204 659383

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Inspection number	308786

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school draws its pupils from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Below average proportions of pupils are eligible for free school meals, or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school community is 70% White British. The other 30% are mainly second generation pupils of Indian and Pakistani heritage. None are at an early stage of learning English. There has been a significant turnover of staff in the last two terms, including the headteacher. The school is led by the deputy headteacher, supported by experienced headteachers from other schools. A new permanent headteacher takes over soon.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Heathfield Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has some good features. Chief amongst these are the personal development and well-being of its pupils and the good start the pupils receive in the Reception class.

Standards in Year 6 are above average. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress in Reception and throughout Key Stage 1, usually reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2 in national teacher assessments. Progress is patchier across Years 3 to 6 and standards have fluctuated in the last two years. In English test results dipped to below average in 2006 but rose again to be above average in 2007 as a result of the school's drive to improve standards in both reading and writing. In science and mathematics, performance dipped in 2007. The newness of some teachers to the school and others to the teaching of particular age groups is the main cause of this fall in standards.

Most parents are pleased with the school. They stress the happy and friendly community and its good range of extra-curricular clubs. Some parents, however, are disappointed with the lack of challenge in some classes, which is something the inspection confirms. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The marking of pupils' work and other advice given to them about improvements needed are weak in some classes. Much of the teaching is good, but some teachers do not match the work well enough to pupils of different abilities and so the work set does not capture their interest effectively enough. These shortcomings limit the effect of teaching.

Pupils speak well of the school. They say that they feel safe, there are many things to do, they do not just have 'boring' lessons, and they enjoy interesting activities. For example, they say, that when they do science they, 'don't just watch, they carry out experiments and investigations themselves'. That the pupils enjoy coming to school is easy to see and well demonstrated by their above average attendance. They are increasingly fit and healthy, thoroughly involved in helping their own school community and more and more aware of the wider community. Their preparation for the next stage of their education is good. The curriculum they experience is satisfactory and they are appropriately supported and cared for in school.

The work of the school is presently being advised and supported to increasingly good effect by experienced headteachers from other schools, as an interim measure, pending the arrival of the new headteacher. The governing body is aware that the school's monitoring systems are not yet sharp enough and the professional development of some staff is not effective enough to bring about the much needed improvement in the consistency of learning across the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's knowledge and skills on entry to the Reception class vary widely but, overall, they are just above average for their age. They make good progress in Reception in all areas of learning because of the good teaching and support they receive. By the time they enter Year 1 they have attained the expected goals, with a significant number exceeding them. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle well into school routines. Relationships are good and children are cared for well in an attractive learning environment. They show good attitudes to their learning because of the good practical activities that engage their interest. Their behaviour is good. Planning and assessment systems are thorough, resulting in work

being matched well to children's needs. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are good, with the staff working well together as a team. Further development is needed to make the outside play area more accessible to enable the Foundation provision to operate continuously through the school day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress at Key Stage 2 and make it consistent across subjects in order to raise standards.
- Sharpen the monitoring of teaching, and the development of the teachers through better training.
- Ensure appropriate challenge in lessons, particularly for those capable of higher attainment.
- Improve marking and other advice for pupils about how to improve their work.
- Improve the access to the outdoor play area for the children in Reception.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory. From just above average standards on entry to the school, pupils make good progress until they reach the end of Year 2, by which time standards in recent years have usually been significantly above average. Progress then levels out and standards sometimes dip across Years 3 to 6 but not consistently so and not always in the same subjects. Current standards are above average and this means that achievement is now satisfactory overall. There are no significant differences between the achievements of pupils of different heritages. Some higher and middle ability pupils do not always make as much progress as they could because they are not always challenged appropriately in some lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance and the enthusiasm they show for all aspects of school life. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and thoroughly underpins much of the school's work. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are all good. There is a very good level of racial harmony in the school. Pupils feel valued as individuals and know to whom to turn in difficulties. They are polite, friendly and welcoming and show respect for each other and for their environment. They have a strong awareness of staying safe, fit and healthy. Pupils are happy to take on responsibilities and they speak articulately about their views and feelings. They are developing an appreciable awareness of the needs of the school's community and beyond. They leave as mature and confident individuals with good personal and academic skills that prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but lacks consistency. The quality ranges from outstanding through to some that is inadequate. The better teaching has pace and keeps pupils fully occupied with interesting tasks, which challenge them all and never go on for too long. It is well planned and lesson objectives are clear. The various tasks are pitched at the right level to stretch the pupils of differing abilities. In these lessons, pupils learn well because they have to think and they have 'talking partners' to bounce ideas off. There is a good measure of self-assessment by pupils, letting the teacher know how confident their understanding is of the work; and some peer assessment, checking and reporting back to each other on the quality of each other's work. Elsewhere, pupils are often given the same task and kept on it for longer than some pupils need for that activity. The mismatch of work to ability in some classes is caused partly by the weak use of assessment records in these classes and the fact that marking does not pick out what needs to be improved, thus limiting the teacher's knowledge of how to challenge effectively the different groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is well balanced and promotes successfully pupils' personal development. It makes effective links between subjects and places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. It includes modern foreign languages in the form of Spanish and is supplemented well by useful visits and interesting visitors. Residential visits are included in Year 6, and there is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported. The match of work to pupils' capabilities is, however, still an area for development in some classrooms, as it was at the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures are in place to safeguard pupils well and to promote their health and safety. There are robust systems in place to support vulnerable pupils and appropriate provision to support pupils' personal, social and health education. An effective system is in place to track the individual progress of pupils. This is enabling teachers to develop a better understanding of what pupils know and can do. The information generated in these records is not yet used as fully as it might be. There are examples of good quality marking of pupils' work, which give them good information about how to improve their work. This is not yet seen consistently across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is in a period of transition between permanent headteachers. The temporary leadership makes up for its lack of experience with hard work and a determination to accurately identify what needs doing to improve the overall quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement, particularly at Key Stage 2. The local authority is supporting the school in this interim period

as the school prepares for the imminent arrival of the new headteacher. The turnover of staff in recent years has led to a loss of valuable expertise and experience but has also brought in fresh blood, new ideas and energy. More systematic monitoring of classroom practice and of the quality of written work is now beginning to take place, but it is not yet rigorous enough to assure the necessary improvements. School development planning is rightly focused upon improving standards and promoting the well-being of every child in the school. It fires simultaneously on too many fronts, however, and is not prioritised enough. Governors are knowledgeable and well led to good effect. They have listened to advice from the local authority, and challenge as well as support the school in a positive and helpful way. Overall, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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 making us so welcome on our recent visit to your school. As we dipped in to each classroom, in turn, we were impressed by how easy it was to discuss your work.

A very special thank you should go to the lively groups of children who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us and to explain why they were happy at Heathfield. They mentioned, especially, how much they enjoyed the activities in lessons and we certainly saw lots of these throughout the school during our visit, especially in the technology lessons in Years 4 and 5 and in the Reception class.

I can see why you are so pleased to attend Heathfield. It is giving you a sound, all- round education. You are all well cared for and most of you are well taught. It was pleasing to see how well behaved you all were, how hard you work, how positive you all are about your learning and how good your overall attendance is.

The results in last year's Key Stage 2 national tests were not as good as the school had hoped for. We have, therefore, asked your new headteacher to ensure that:

- teaching and learning are monitored carefully to ensure that standards in the juniors bounce back up again to match the high standards of previous years
- your teachers are given the necessary extra training so that they know how to improve your progress
- the work is well matched to what you are capable of doing
- marking and other advice helps you improve your work
- it is made easier for the Reception children to make the best use of their outdoor play area.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard and always taking your learning as seriously as we saw you doing.