

Heathcoat Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113343
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311222
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Rowe
Headteacher	Jon Statton
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Broad Lane Tiverton EX16 5HE
Telephone number	01884 252445
Fax number	01884 252302

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Heathcoat Primary School is a larger than average size school located in Tiverton. A nursery provides part-time places for 46 children. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and their first language is English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Heathcoat Primary School provides a good quality of education. It is a very happy school where pupils display good behaviour and have very positive attitudes to learning. This is because of the high quality of pastoral care and the stimulating range of activities provided by the outstanding curriculum. As one parent commented, 'There is a caring and inspiring environment at the school.' The caring ethos is shared by all staff and promotes pupils' good personal development. Pupils also develop an excellent understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle through using the school grounds to grow food and by participating in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils make good progress because of the good quality of teaching provided by a committed staff team. Pupils achieve particularly well in science, aided by the imaginative use of the school environment to support learning. Progress is slower in Year 1 and Year 2, especially in writing. The school has taken steps to tackle this and attainment is beginning to rise. A few higher attaining pupils do not make enough progress because teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high quality of support they receive.

The school attaches a high priority to working very closely with parents, the community and other agencies. These excellent links enhance the curriculum and are very effective in promoting pupils' enjoyment of learning and their personal well-being. Most parents hold extremely positive views of the school. They particularly appreciate the high quality of care and the way staff are available to deal with any issues or problems. A few expressed concerns about behaviour in the playground. During the inspection behaviour was found to be good and the school has appropriate procedures in place to deal with any incidents of misbehaviour.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together to provide a clear vision for the school. Much has been achieved since the last inspection, particularly in improving the building, the curriculum and use of the school grounds. The school has recently reorganised its management structure, which shows good potential for further improving performance. Some senior leaders are relatively new in post and are developing their roles and responsibilities. Assessment data are not used sufficiently to analyse the school's performance and to provide a sharp enough focus for monitoring the success of its work. Governors provide good oversight of the school's work and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children get off to a good start. When children begin school, their standards are below the level that might be expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They respond confidently to the clearly established routines and the wide range of interesting activities so that they make good progress. However, in the Nursery, children sometimes lack opportunities to follow their own interests and to take the lead in their learning. The assessment and recording of progress is generally good, although in the Nursery staff have only recently begun to use observations of pupils at play to inform planning for the next stages of learning. There is ample outdoor space for all Foundation Stage children and this is put to good use. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to boost the confidence of pupils and to promote the enjoyment of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of higher attaining pupils by providing them with greater challenge in lessons.
- Raise standards by using assessment information more effectively to monitor and evaluate the school's performance.
- Provide greater opportunities for children in the Nursery to take the lead in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they enter the school most children are below the expected starting point for their age. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics vary each year but are generally below the national average. Relatively few pupils gain the highest levels in writing and mathematics. The school has introduced a systematic approach to teaching literacy which is beginning to show improvement, and progress in Years 1 and 2 is now satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 they reach standards which are broadly in line with the national average. Achievement in science is strongest, with a large number of pupils gaining the highest levels in national tests. In English and mathematics some of the most capable pupils do not achieve as well as might be expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, particularly in improving their literacy and developing their social skills. This is because of the carefully targeted individual and small group support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is highly successful in creating well-balanced, confident individuals. Pupils' attitudes in and out of the classroom are extremely positive. They are friendly and welcoming, happy to discuss their work and talk enthusiastically about their school. They really appreciate the interesting and stimulating experiences the school gives them during lessons and through lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and are very aware of how to keep themselves healthy. The school's emphasis on outdoor education and experiences such as camping out and night hikes on Dartmoor give pupils a very real understanding of the power and wonder of the natural world. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and feel part of a community where adults take their concerns seriously whilst being approachable and friendly. They contribute to the larger community through involvement with national and local charities, and take part in local events within Tiverton and with other schools. The school council provides good experience of responsibility and democratic involvement. Pupils have a good awareness of their own culture, but their knowledge of the different religious and cultural traditions in wider society is underdeveloped. Attendance is satisfactory and the school stresses the importance of regular attendance. Unauthorised absence is low, but a minority of pupils take holidays in term time. Pupils' standards in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology give them a satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A significant feature of the good teaching is the very constructive relationships that exist between adults and pupils. The development of positive attitudes to learning ensures that most pupils are fully motivated and keen to do well. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and ensure that activities are designed to meet the needs of most pupils. The exception to this is where, in some lessons, insufficient challenge is provided for the more able pupils. Lessons are made interesting through the use of real-life situations and attractive resources, including the interactive whiteboard. Skilful questioning increasingly helps the pupils to promote their speaking, listening and thinking skills. Lessons are maintained at a good pace so that pupils remain engaged throughout. The use of marking is satisfactory. Most teachers give pupils helpful feedback in lessons and through comments written in books, although there is inconsistency between classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The talents of the staff are used fully to review and adapt the curriculum and seek ways to make activities relevant and exciting. This is especially evident through challenging investigations in subjects like science. The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn in outdoor settings. This is partly through the excellent use of the school grounds as well as trips much further afield, such as those to Dartmoor or France. Equally valuable are the excellent opportunities provided for pupils to develop their love of the Arts. The school draws on a wide range of visiting artists in addition to organising trips to theatres, musical events and art exhibitions. Almost all pupils take part in one or more of the extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the learning opportunities for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Robust procedures are in place to ensure the safety of all working within the school community. All safeguarding requirements are met. Relationships between the school and home are exceptionally good. Staff really get to know their pupils and their families to ensure that pupils feel happy and secure at school. The outstanding arrangements for pastoral care ensure that appropriate support strategies are provided for every child and problems are quickly identified and dealt with. Staff work closely with parents and make very good use of outside agencies to enhance support, for example for pupils whose first language is not English and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress and for providing suitable guidance on how pupils might improve are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Heathcoat Primary School is a very inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed. One parent recognised the role of the headteacher in building a dedicated staff team with shared values, and described him as 'inspiring and encouraging'. Priorities to provide a high quality of care

for pupils and to extend the curriculum have been successfully achieved. However, until recently, leadership has not focused enough on raising the school's academic standards. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and senior leaders monitor teaching and learning regularly. The school has recently improved its assessment and moderation arrangements to ensure information accurately shows individual pupils' progress. Data are not yet used sufficiently to compare the performance of different groups in the school and to set challenging targets. The school uses its resources well. The school building and grounds are used very effectively to enhance the curriculum and staff are deployed efficiently, particularly to provide support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The governing body has good systems in place for checking the school's performance and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

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Annex A

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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

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?	1
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 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	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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heathcoat Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 5HE

As you know, I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. Thank you to those of you who talked to us about your work and life at the school. You were very polite and helpful and made our visit a pleasant one. I am writing to let you know what we thought about your school.

Here are the main points.

- Heathcoat School gives you a good education.
- You really enjoy coming to school, have very positive attitudes to learning and your behaviour is good.
- This is helped by the exciting activities which the school provides for you, such as the trips, visits, clubs, and interesting lessons.
- You make good progress, particularly in science, where many of you do very well in tests at the end of Year 6.
- You have a really good understanding of the need to keep fit and healthy.
- Teaching at the school is good and adults care for you very well.
- The school has excellent links with your parents and others in the community.
- Those of you who need extra help with your learning get good support which helps you to make good progress.

I have asked the school to do three things to make it even better.

- Give harder work to some of you so you make faster progress.
- Use information about your learning to check more closely how well you are doing.
- Allow children in the Nursery to follow their interests more often.

You can help by always trying your best and talking to your teachers about your work.

Best wishes

Andrew Redpath Her Majesty's Inspector

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