

Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124593
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	314976
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert McKeown 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	506
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Little
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Bowditch
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Bell Lane Kesgrave Ipswich IP5 1JG
Telephone number	01473 622806
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Age group	4–11
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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

Heath is large community primary school situated in the Kesgrave district of Ipswich, in Suffolk. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than is typical for this size of school. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need and three are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. Most children start school in the Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that match those expected for their age. The headteacher has led the school since 2004. There has been considerable disruption to staffing since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Children enjoy attending Heath Primary School and most of their parents are pleased with the education it provides. The school's overall effectiveness is currently satisfactory but staff and governors have introduced a number of positive changes to bring about some important improvements. As one parent recorded in a returned questionnaire 'I really believe the school is working hard to get things right'

Pupils at Heath are enthusiastic about school and their attendance is above average. A good quality curriculum with a broad range of activities, including French, provides interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' enjoyment and interest. There are particular strengths in the arts and information and communication technology (ICT). Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school, because they are well cared for and know that adults will listen to any concerns they might have. Their involvement in the school and class councils is effective in giving them the chance to have a say in school improvements. Older pupils contribute well to the school community, taking responsibility for classroom tasks as well as acting as reader leaders, play leaders and team captains. Pupils' good computer skills and the opportunities they have to take part in enterprise activities help prepare them well for their future learning.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Outcomes in Key Stage 2 are not as good. In the last three years, pupils in Year 6 have underachieved and reached no better than average standards. The school is taking suitable action to raise standards further and improve achievement. Tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous and a sharp focus is placed on how well they are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is better than it was and is now satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and the very small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English also make satisfactory progress.

Progress from Year 2 to Year 6 has been adversely affected by inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Although teaching is improving and a good proportion of lessons are taught well, too much variation and inconsistency remain. A higher proportion of good teaching is required if pupils are to achieve better standards and make consistently good progress. A number of new approaches have been introduced to improve the quality of lessons. Where these are working effectively, pupils' learning is more purposeful and progress is good. The overall quality of teachers' marking is variable and requires improvement, as does the presentation in some pupils' books.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management responsibilities have been delegated successfully to several members of staff. Key governors support the school well and their role as critical friend is improving. There is a collective determination to improve standards and the quality of provision. Changes introduced in recent months are beginning to make a difference. The school's capacity to continue to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children settle happily into the Nursery and quickly become confident about class routines. There are good links with local playgroups and positive relationships with parents. Transition arrangements from Nursery to Reception are also good

and this helps to ensure that children continue to learn successfully. Children achieve well because good links are made between the different areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year, most children reach standards that are at or above the level expected for their age. Teaching is good and in the best lessons, there is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children. Children enjoy their learning and talk excitedly about the things they do such as being 'entomologists' and finding out about bugs. The Foundation Stage leader manages staff well and all adults work effectively as a team. The outdoor learning environment is an area identified by the school that requires improvement so that it is used more effectively as an extension of classroom learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning, including assessment and marking, to enable pupils to make good progress in all classes.
- Increase opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to extend their learning outdoors.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

In the last two years, standards attained by pupils in Year 2 have been above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007, above average proportions of pupils achieved the higher level 3 in reading and writing. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Results have not been as good in Year 6. Although the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 matched the national average in 2007, too many pupils who were capable of doing better failed to reach the higher level 5. Action taken by the school is beginning to put this right. Teachers are undertaking regular assessments of pupils' progress and now understand how much progress pupils should be making each year. The most recent teacher assessments indicate that pupils in Year 6 will do better in the national tests in 2008, meeting the targets set for them. The latest checks also reveal that while progress is improving in Years 3, 4 and 5, there remain pupils in some classes who are underachieving. Pupils acquire a suitable range of skills and make good progress in ICT as a result of good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show a positive attitude to teamwork and each other, and are very keen to earn points for their 'family' group. In lessons and assemblies, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their feelings and appreciate the consequences of their actions. They are aware of the need to live healthily, eat nutritious snacks at playtime and drink water during the day. Their involvement in physical education lessons, 'activate' sessions, swimming and sports clubs encourages them to be active and keep fit. Pupils' views are respected; they get the chance to have their say and play a part in improving their school. The school council takes the lead in organising events, such as raising funds for playground equipment, which the pupils have designed themselves. They also support a number of appeals and charities. Older pupils take responsibility in school and make a positive

contribution to the wider community; they are looking forward to entertaining older residents at a performance relating to World War II.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; this matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation. Inspectors observed a number of good lessons. In these, teachers gave pupils many opportunities to talk about their learning and asked probing questions to assess their understanding. They also linked learning across subjects and involved pupils in practical tasks to support their understanding. Most staff have good relationships with pupils, which result in lessons that are conducted in a friendly and purposeful manner. Guided lessons have been introduced to help raise standards and focus learning more precisely for groups of pupils. These are more successful where all groups are purposefully engaged and suitably challenged. Teaching assistants are valuable members of the teaching team. They work very effectively with groups of pupils who benefit from the additional support. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although the quality varies between classes and rarely relates to the purpose of the lesson or suggests the next steps in learning. The quality of presentation in pupils' books varies significantly from class to class and in some cases is too untidy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers share their expertise to plan the curriculum carefully to meet pupils' different needs and abilities. Effective links between subjects, for example in the creative arts, are reflected in the high quality art work displayed throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on creativity and giving pupils the chance to take part in interesting challenges; Year 6 pupils were successful recently in a national 2012 Olympic competition to design a velodrome. Meeting visitors and making visits, including residential trips, extend and enliven the curriculum. ICT provision is good. Pupils develop a high level of confidence and skill and use computers and other devices well. Provision for personal, social and health education is also good.

Many pupils take part in a range of club activities, including in sports and the arts. Good use is made of the excellent outdoor areas to enhance both learning and enjoyment. A programme of extension activities is organised to challenge the most able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a caring and supportive environment. Appropriate procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils and these comply with the latest government requirements. Health and safety checks are carried out regularly. Staff receive regular updating training on child protection and administering first aid. Incidents of racism and bullying are rare and dealt with appropriately. There are good links with local service agencies to provide additional support for pupils who need it. The lunchtime nurture group gives valuable support to pupils who require a more structured play environment. Pupils settle well when they enter the school and are prepared suitably for transfer to secondary school. They have targets to help them improve their writing and these have been shared with parents. The school has organised a number of curriculum workshops to give parents a better understanding of how and what their children are learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior staff have set out priorities for improvement in the school's development plan. Targets in the plan are not precise enough about the outcomes for pupils and the monitoring and evaluation procedures require clarification. Leadership and management responsibilities are shared well among key staff. Year group leaders meet regularly with their staff teams to coordinate planning and assessment. Core subject leaders have helped introduce new teaching approaches in English and mathematics. The coordinator for special educational needs efficiently manages the provision mapped out for pupils who require additional support. Checks on the quality of teaching have been undertaken by the headteacher, more recently together with senior leaders, in order to introduce further improvements. Less emphasis has been placed on evaluating the outcomes of pupils' learning through scrutinising their books to check on standards. There are positive links with other schools and staff have worked well with local authority consultants to evaluate provision and strengthen teaching. Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors keeps up to date with progress on bringing about improvements by meeting regularly with the headteacher. Governors acknowledge that they need to undertake regular audits of parents' views and formalise their monitoring of the school in action.

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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?	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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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.

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	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	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	3
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

22 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Heath Primary School, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP5 1JG

Thank you for helping us with our inspection work when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school. It is our opinion that your school is satisfactory at the moment and that your headteacher, your teachers and the governors are working hard to make the school better for you.

We enjoyed talking to you about the things you do at Heath. You told us that you liked coming to school and that everyone gets on well together. We thought your behaviour was good and that most of you worked well in your lessons. The school council has some good ideas to make the school a better place for everyone. We also liked the fact that you have plenty of clubs and many activities to help you keep fit and healthy. It was good to hear that older children help younger ones with their reading and with playing games at break times. We were impressed with the artwork on display and seeing some of the things you do in ICT. Well done to those children who did so well in the 'velodream' competition; it was an excellent achievement.

Your teachers and the adults that support you care for you well and want everyone to succeed. Before we left, we asked your headteacher and your teachers to help you reach higher standards by the time you leave the school and make sure that all your lessons are good ones. You can help by presenting your work in your books well and by doing your best in all your lessons. We would also like to see more outdoor learning activities organised for the younger children.

You have a lot to look forward to in the rest of the year; I hope you enjoy it.

With best wishes

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector