

Halsford Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125937
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315363
Inspection dates	6–7 February 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hawksworth
Headteacher	Lesley Corbett
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Manor Road East Grinstead RH19 1LR
Telephone number	01342 324643
Fax number	01324 300680

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Inspection number	315363

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Halsford Park Primary School is a large school which serves a prosperous community. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and are fluent in English. The school became part of a federation with Baldwins Hill Primary School in April 2007. The two schools share the same headteacher and governing body, and some senior leaders have responsibilities in both schools. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006 and there have been changes in all the other senior leadership positions in the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science.

Although teaching is currently satisfactory, there is a legacy of underachievement and the pace of recent improvement has not been fast enough to enable pupils to achieve their potential. Teachers are not consistently using information on pupils' progress to plan work, and this leads to insufficient challenge in some lessons. Many positive strategies to improve teaching and learning have been introduced recently but have not yet had time to demonstrate their full effect. In spite of these weaknesses, adequate support for pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they are making satisfactory progress.

The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the future of the school. She has tackled successfully several difficult issues in order to move the school forward. The school is introducing more exciting and stimulating activities in the curriculum. The use of targets to raise achievement is quite recent and the reliability and use of assessment data are not yet fully established. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and areas for further development and new initiatives are beginning to raise standards. Senior leaders have still to develop fully their roles and responsibilities and not all subject leaders are involved closely in monitoring and evaluating their subjects. This means that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning between classes have not been resolved. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are happy to come to school and a large number participate in the good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The school provides a caring environment. In the words of one pupil, 'All the staff are just so kind.' The very large majority of parents hold positive views about the school and especially value its caring ethos. As expressed by one parent, 'The school is very approachable and caring. The teachers always have time to see you and listen to you.' A few parents expressed concerns that some children were not given hard enough work, particularly in mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When they enter the school, most children are at the expected or better starting point for their age. Good links with pre-school providers and thorough induction procedures mean that children settle happily. Effective communication between staff and parents ensures important information is shared and any concerns are followed up quickly. Management of the provision is satisfactory. Adults provide suitable routines so that children are beginning to develop their independence, but sometimes miss opportunities for children to question, explain and engage in discussion with each other. This limits the development of their language and communication skills. Also, teachers do not always plan sufficiently for children to develop their physical and creative skills by working and playing in the outdoor area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by using assessment data more effectively to set challenging targets.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making consistent use of information showing pupils' progress to provide suitable challenge in all lessons.
- Sharpen the monitoring roles of middle leaders to ensure that good teaching and learning are consistent across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils make a satisfactory start in Reception and by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average each year. By the end of Year 6, there is a marked variation in pupils' attainment between different subjects. Standards in English are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science are broadly average but when taking into consideration pupils' high attainment at the end of Year 2, this represents inadequate progress. The school has introduced sharper assessment and the improved use of targets to raise standards. Pupils are now being given more challenging work in many lessons. However, despite making better progress recently, the legacy of underperformance results in pupils' overall achievement being less than should be expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the individual tuition and extra support in class provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. Their behaviour is good and they work well together. They feel safe in school and do not regard bullying as a serious issue. They are sensitive to each other's needs, both in the classroom and when playing outside. They benefit from regular personal, social and health education sessions, school assemblies, visits and visitors to school. This provision encourages a very good awareness of different religions and cultures and promotes a genuine respect for others. The pupils enjoy school and their attendance is in line with the national average. They are keen to show off improvements to the environment such as the pond and outside learning area. They are also very enthusiastic about special events such as One World Week, the Chinese New Year or a Year 5 visit to a local Chinese restaurant. The school council is very active and pupils feel they are listened to. For example, the school council decided how funding would be spent on new play equipment. Pupils are also physically active and are aware of the need to eat healthy food. Many walk to school and they all take the opportunities to participate in physical education and sport. There is a strong sense of community in the school and pupils have raised money successfully for a range of charities. The development of pupils' economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is not yet enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make up for their relatively slow progress in recent years. The school has introduced several strategies which are beginning to raise standards. Teachers are matching tasks more closely to pupils' levels of ability, providing

more variety in their planning and increasing opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas. Inconsistency still exists between classes, especially in the use of assessment information and in the pace of learning. This sometimes results in the activities not providing sufficient challenge, which limits progress. There is a pleasant atmosphere in lessons which ensures pupils feel happy and behave well. Some teachers are relatively new to the profession. They are enthusiastic and committed and show good potential. Teaching assistants offer satisfactory support in lessons, often working closely with pupils who have learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision in the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Good enrichment is provided from an extensive range of clubs and activities, for example, football, art and breakfast clubs, and residential visits. These provide good opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and to develop their social skills. The school correctly identified the need to improve the balance in the curriculum and provide a stronger focus on the development of pupils' academic skills. More time is now allocated for the teaching of mathematics and new activities are being introduced which stimulate excitement and interest in learning. These include the use of visiting speakers in science and more investigative work in mathematics. The full impact of this work has yet to be seen.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers are firm but friendly and the children feel that they know whom to turn to for help. Child protection procedures are secure. Vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties receive appropriate support. The school provides good support for pupils for whom English is not the first language. Pupils are very appreciative of the fair and clear way in which the school encourages good behaviour, for example through the 'marbles' reward system. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced a number of changes to show children how to improve in different subjects. All pupils now have targets for improvement in English and mathematics. They are also encouraged to evaluate their own work. These improvements are not consistently applied in all classes and they have not had time to make a significant difference to standards and pupils' rates of progress. Targets for some pupils are not yet challenging enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's drive and determination have guided the school through a challenging time which has seen changes in all the senior leadership posts. In the words of one parent, 'She is such a positive and enthusiastic headteacher. She has a lovely relationship with the children.' Staff at all levels promote a caring environment where all pupils feel valued and are included in the life of the school. The school has good links with other schools and the wider community. Senior leaders are committed to raising the school's academic standards. Several are still developing their roles and responsibilities and some of their skills are not used to best effect in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. This is limiting the effect of initiatives on raising standards. Suitable plans are in place to improve the monitoring role of subject leaders. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and works

closely with other partners in selecting priorities for development. Recently there has been a sharper focus on raising pupils' academic performance by the use of targets. Also, a system for checking pupils' progress has been introduced which is enabling the school to identify pupils who are underachieving. However, the school's current use of targets is not fully effective because the analysis of detailed data is a recent development and there is uncertainty over the accuracy of some assessment information.

The governing body is currently under strength but it provides a satisfactory level of challenge and support. It maintains close involvement in the school, particularly through regular contact between the headteacher and the chair of governors. The school is still developing its ability to utilise fully the potential benefits of federation to further school improvement.

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?	4
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	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?	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	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halsford Park Primary School, East Grinstead RH19 1LR

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. I am writing to let you know what we thought about your school.

Here are the main points.

- Your school is a happy place; you enjoy coming to school and your behaviour is good.
- Most of you enjoy attending the after-school clubs and activities and going out on visits.
- You get involved in the life of the school and in the wider community, for example through the school council and raising money for charity.
- Children in the Reception class make a satisfactory start to school.
- Your headteacher and staff care for you well and help you if you have a problem.
- Your parents are pleased with the school, particularly with how well you are looked after.
- Those of you in classes from Year 3 to Year 6 are not making fast enough progress with your work, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Because of the need to make more progress in Year 3 to Year 6, we have given the school what is called a 'Notice to Improve', and I have asked the school to do three things to make it better.
- Use targets to help the school aim higher.
- Help teachers to make better use of information on your progress so work is set at the right level.
- Check more thoroughly how well you are getting on in lessons and make sure some of the good things the school is doing happen in all classes.

You can help by trying your best and working hard, particularly in mathematics and science.

Best wishes

Andrew Redpath Her Majesty's Inspector