

# Heronshaw School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130953
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	315675
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr T Kirtley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lichfield Down Walnut Tree Milton Keynes MK7 7PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 608380
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 242025

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<b>Age group</b>	4-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the achievement made by pupils who are an early stage of learning English, how well the school makes use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and how well governors carry out their role. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work and observation of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Heronshaw is a smaller than average school. It has two classes for each year group. About three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is above the national average. Currently there are 12 different languages spoken as pupils' home language. There are 11 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school has Healthy School, Sports Activemark and Basic Skills Quality Mark status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Heronshaw provides a good standard of education. There have been many improvements made over recent years. It has some significant strengths and pupils are prepared well for transfer to the junior school.

Pupils' progress is good. Although children starting in the Reception class enter school with skills below those typically found, particularly in the communication, language and literacy area of learning, they settle quickly and well. This is because the school has what one parent described as 'a safe and nurturing environment.' It is the outstanding care, guidance and support that provides the bedrock on which pupils in all year groups thrive in their academic and personal development. Pupils are motivated to learn and try their best.

Teaching is consistently good and has some outstanding features. As one pupil said, 'The teachers help us to learn and we like to learn because it makes our brains strong.' Lessons are made interesting because pupils are given a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities that are well matched to their learning needs. Teachers are skilled in questioning pupils. They use the interactive whiteboards particularly effectively to help to engage and capture pupils' interests. Classrooms are a hive of buzzing activity where pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and learning. Work is underway to make sure that teachers do not spend too long talking to pupils before they commence activities. This slows the pace of learning and is the one significant aspect of teaching that is less than good. At the time of the previous inspection, work in ICT was a weakness. This is not now the case. Resources have been strengthened and because teachers' confidence has been improved as a result of a good training programme, ICT is now a strength. As well as having dedicated lessons in the suite, pupils use ICT well in lessons. This is because teachers invariably include the use of ICT in their planning in many curricular areas. In addition, there is a good range of software available to enable the many laptops to be used to support learning. In consequence, pupils are confident and competent and their skills in ICT are above average.

The increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language has led to the school having a specialist teacher for them. Provision for these pupils is excellent and they make rapid progress in their acquisition of English. By the time that they leave the school, their attainment matches that of other pupils. As one parent of Polish heritage wrote, 'My daughter spoke no English but the staff have made every effort to help her learning. It is so great to see that my child's needs are so well cared for.' Pupils are supported well by the talented group of classroom support staff who also ensure that any pupils who are in danger of slipping behind are effectively supported. As a result, the progress of all groups is good.

Development work in writing has been successful and in all year groups, pupils make good progress in this area. Standards in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been at the national average for the past few years and this marks good achievement from below average starting points. However, progress is accelerating and many of the current Year 2 pupils have reached standards that are above expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and the pupils are a delight! They are open, friendly, confident and enjoy everything that they do. Even though the school has some pupils who have challenging behaviour, they are managed and supported exceptionally well. This is because the culture of the school is such that their needs are met well. Overall, behaviour is excellent and because systems for academic guidance

are good, pupils know what their targets are and what they have to do to improve. They are encouraged to be active and there are many opportunities for them to do this. They enjoy the 'Huff 'n Puff' aerobic sessions and know the importance of healthy eating and are aware of how to keep safe and secure. Social and collaborative skills are developed well. 'We like to work together on things,' commented a school councillor. This is evident not only in lessons but also in the way that pupils relish taking responsibility. They are keen to be Year 2 monitors and also to be members of the school council. These pupils were keen to point out how they help to raise money for charities and were involved in extending the range of equipment in the playground and changes in the dining room furniture.

Parents are unanimous in their support of every aspect of the school and the myriad of positive comments about how their children thrive demonstrates their strong appreciation. The leadership of the headteacher is pivotal to the school's success. He has provided outstanding leadership in promoting school improvement. His quiet and supportive manner belies the determined commitment to continue to improve provision and standards. Staff appreciate the opportunity for them to be involved in decision-making and this results in very strong teamwork by all the adults in the school. Morale is high and the headteacher's vision for the future of the school is shared by all. Governance has much improved since the previous inspection. The governing body as a whole are knowledgeable, active and supportive. They understand the importance of holding the school to account. Some governors take care to find out about provision by attending school and writing high quality reports about what they find to inform other governors. However, as yet, this good practice is limited to a small group of governors. Nonetheless, this enables the governing body to sensitively question the school and challenge staff to do even better. The school's good progress since the previous inspection demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress and achieve well. They are taught well through the good curriculum that ensures that there is a good balance between both direct teaching by adults and the freedom to children to choose and learn from a wide variety of activities. They benefit from a safe and secure environment which incorporates the generous indoor space and the space outdoors. The close partnership between all members of staff ensures that all take joint responsibility for recording children's achievements. In consequence as well as getting to know all the children well as individuals, their progress is monitored carefully by the use of direct observation notes. This good practice not only ensures that future work is suitably challenging but also ensures that children gain a balanced range of experiences across all areas of learning. Because staff rightly place a particular emphasis on developing language and literacy skills, progress in this area is particularly good. By the time the children start Year 1, the majority have achieved the expected goals for their age in most areas. However, the proportion gaining the learning goals for communication, language and literacy is a little below that usually found.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure that the pace of learning does not drop because teachers' introductory sessions are too long.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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**

18 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heronshaw School, Milton Keynes, MK7 7PG

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you very much for the friendly way you welcomed me and for your help in finding out about the school.

Both you and your parents told me that you love school and that you feel safe and well cared for. I agree. Yours is a good school and everybody who works there tries hard to help you to do well. Your teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are made interesting and exciting. Your headteacher has done an excellent job to make sure that everyone helps you all to work and play together in such a friendly way and to make the school successful. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and your positive attitudes to each other. This was not easy on the day of the inspection because it rained hard for the whole day! Your teachers help you to learn well and also make sure that everyone feels part of the family of your school.

You work hard in lessons so that you learn lots of new things. Your progress is good and you attain equally good standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

I have asked your teachers to do one thing. This is to make sure that they do not spend too long talking to you at the beginning of lessons before you start your activities.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to me.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector