

Hurst Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101446
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	323462
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Krafft HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	623
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Hodges
Headteacher	Mr Tony Linnett
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dorchester Avenue Bexley DA5 3AJ
Telephone number	020 8303 2688
Fax number	020 8303 5699

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hurst Primary is a large school with a Nursery. There are more boys than girls and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage and approximately one tenth are from other ethnic groups. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than found nationally. Dyslexia, communication and autistic spectrum disorder are the main needs of this group. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. A breakfast club and after school care are located on the school site and managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hurst Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils in an attractive, well-ordered learning environment. Most parents are supportive of the school and note that improvements are being made. They value the recently introduced updates that they receive on their child's progress and comment positively on the school's 'family feel'. As one parent wrote, 'The school is a very warm and welcoming place'. Pupils say, and their parents agree, that they enjoy school, particularly the good range of sports activities that they are offered. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy as a result. They generally feel safe and well cared for, although less so at lunchtime when a few pupils can be over-boisterous. The school has appropriate plans to address this.

The school values the partnerships it has with the local church, community and other schools. These links help to enrich pupils' learning and contribute to their enjoyment of school. The curriculum meets pupils' needs appropriately and action is underway to develop more creative links between subjects.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. There has been an improvement in the standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics where standards are above average. However, the progress that pupils make as they move through the school is inconsistent and some do not achieve as well as they should. This is because assessment information is not used with consistent rigour to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' different needs. Consequently, although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some lessons are good, the quality varies between subjects and classes. Some parents noted their concerns about these inconsistencies.

In lessons, pupils are attentive, generally behave well and are keen to participate because relationships are good. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop independence when tasks lack variety and teachers spend too much time talking. Although work is marked regularly and pupils understand that they have targets, marking and targets are not used effectively to guide pupils so that they know how to improve.

The headteacher has worked hard with his senior leadership team to raise expectations and develop a shared understanding of what needs to be improved. Priorities are appropriate and include those identified by parents, teachers and governors. Systems are in place to track pupils' progress and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, the role of leaders and managers at all levels is not yet sufficiently developed to ensure their evaluations are accurate and that actions they take are focused on securing high standards and raising achievement for all pupils.

Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This and improved standards at the end of Year 2 demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children enter the Nursery, their skills and knowledge are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Home and pre-school visits help children to settle happily and establish good links with parents. The welfare needs of children are quickly identified, met well and parents are appreciative of the friendly care provided. Most children have the skills and

knowledge expected for their age when they join and make satisfactory progress towards their learning goals. Leadership and management of the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) are satisfactory. A recent audit of provision has highlighted points for development which are being addressed appropriately. For example, resources have been reorganised and there is a better balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by the children. Checks have started on the choices that children make to encourage them to try different types of activities, including those provided in the outdoor area. Planned activities are helping children to understand the importance of paying attention, following instructions and taking turns. However, where staff expectations are not high enough, a few children do not always follow expected routines.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information to ensure that teaching consistently meets the needs of all pupils.
- Engage pupils fully in their learning to help them achieve as well as they can by providing them with guidance on how to improve their work.
- Focus the actions of all leaders and managers on securing high standards and good progress for all pupils.

A small proportion of 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

There has been an improvement over time in standards at the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been more variable although they are better in English than in mathematics and science. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall from their starting points during their time at the school. However, rates of progress are inconsistent and some pupils do not make the progress that they should because assessment information is not used effectively to ensure all groups are provided with the support and challenge they need to achieve well. The school has identified groups of pupils who have underachieved, for example, some low-attaining boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Appropriate steps have been taken to accelerate the progress of these pupils who are now making satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Spiritual and cultural development, for example, are supported appropriately through workshops on Hinduism and regular assemblies led by members of the local church. Reading partnerships between older and younger pupils and inter-school sports tournaments support the development of their social skills. Pupils know right from wrong and are respectful towards adults. Most behave well in lessons although some are less engaged when they are not given sufficient opportunities to be involved or develop their independence. They say they feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical and sporting activities, which contribute to their good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. The school council contributes to the school's development, although participation is limited to pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils contribute to

the wider community, for example through fundraising for charities such as the Duduza homes in South Africa. Pupils are articulate, confident and have the appropriate literacy, numeracy and social skills for their next steps in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers generally plan work which is linked to pupils' interests, but this is not always sufficiently well matched to their ability levels. Pupils listen attentively to the teachers' explanations, but questioning does not always encourage all pupils to contribute fully to discussions. In lessons where the teaching is good, planning builds on accurate assessment of prior learning, pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss and share their ideas and teaching methods engage all groups of learners. Less effective lessons are typified by too much talking by the teacher and activities that are not sufficiently challenging, varied or interesting. Teaching assistants are not always engaged effectively in lessons to support pupils' learning. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but do not consistently indicate what pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of pupils appropriately but curriculum planning varies between classes and year groups. There are increasing opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects, for example by using history to develop pupils' writing. A curriculum review is underway to make it more creative by developing these links further. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including football, tag rugby, cricket and gymnastics that contribute to their enjoyment of school. There are regular opportunities to showcase their speaking, dance and drama skills to parents and members of the local community, through performances such as in musical productions and the international dance festival. They also enjoy the annual pantomime. These are particularly valued and enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel well cared for and effective arrangements for safeguarding them are in place. Teaching assistants are adequately trained in how to support pupils with specific needs such as speech, language and communication and there are appropriate links with external specialists. Assessments are used to identify pupils' needs and target additional support. However, some parents noted that support for pupils with specific needs 'could be more regular'. Although 'next steps cards' have recently been introduced and pupils have individual targets, these are not yet used effectively to guide pupils on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has clear expectations and an accurate understanding of what needs to improve. He has developed a senior leadership team whose members share this understanding so appropriate priorities are identified in the plan for improvement. However, milestones to monitor progress robustly and evaluate the impact of actions on pupils' learning are not specific enough. Performance management processes are in place and monitoring activities are carried out by the headteacher on a regular basis but less frequently by other leaders. Governors meet regularly, are well informed and understand the priorities for improvement as well as the issues that are barriers to faster progress. They have taken action to support the headteacher to implement change but their ability to challenge leaders at all levels on the impact of school actions is limited by the lack of quantifiable measures of success in the school improvement plan.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

04 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hurst Primary School, Bexley, DA5 3AJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking with so many of you. You were friendly, confident and told us what you thought very clearly.

You and your parents told us that you like school and it is a welcoming, caring place. You come to school regularly and you know a lot about how to stay fit and healthy. You told us that you particularly like practical activities such as doing experiments in science. You take part in many different sports and you put on lots of plays and performances for your parents and others. We hope the pantomime went well.

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school an attractive place to learn and you get a satisfactory education. They have listened to what you and your parents have told them about how some of you feel at lunchtimes. They are planning changes to make this better. We have asked them to help you even more by making sure your lessons and the work you are given are not too easy or too hard. We want them to let you know exactly what you can do to improve your work. We have also asked them to keep checking that the things they are doing to improve your school are helping you learn as well as you can.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and we hope that you carry on working hard and enjoying school.

Yours faithfully

Jackie Krafft

Her Majesty's Inspector