

Heavers Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101776
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323526
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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)	421
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	Mrs Patricia Salami
Headteacher	Ms Susan Papas
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	58 Dinsdale Gardens South Norwood SE25 6LT
Telephone number	020 8653 5434
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average and it now has an increasing proportion of pupils joining the school, following a period when the number had declined sharply. The school has a Nursery and two Reception classes; together, these form the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils come from many different cultural backgrounds. The largest groups are those from Black Caribbean, White British, Black African and from Mixed or Asian heritages. A higher than average proportion speak English as an additional language. A few pupils are from Gypsy Roma heritages. Close to half of all pupils receive free school meals, which is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. Pupils' difficulties largely relate to problems in language and communication skills, behaviour or dyslexia. The school has a high proportion of looked after and vulnerable pupils. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year is high. When the headteacher joined the school in January 2007, the school was facing several complex difficulties and aspects of the school's work were not as good as they should have been.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Heavers Farm provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. At the time of the last inspection the quality of education was satisfactory. Following this, the school faced a number of complex difficulties and standards fell considerably in 2007. The school is now recovering well and is improving as a result of strengthened leadership, improved teamwork and developments in teaching. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen. Most importantly, in the last year, teaching and pupils' achievement have lifted from being inadequate to become satisfactory. Parents confirm that their children are safe and happy at school and almost all pupils enjoy school. Senior leaders note that, 'Staff morale is higher and the general atmosphere in the school is more positive than it was.' As the headteacher so correctly says, 'Together we care and achieve.'

Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher provides determined vision, drive and good leadership skills. Her work underpins the recent recovery. The headteacher is helping leaders at all levels to widen their skills, so that responsibilities are shared. Links with outside organisations are good and contribute much to the improving work of the school. Almost all parents have confidence in the school. Parents say such things as, 'The headteacher is effective, offers support and deals with issues fairly and promptly.'

Since 2007, standards, by the end of Year 6, have been rising throughout the school. This is because teaching, leadership and assessment are satisfactory and steadily improving. Teaching is now good in some classes and staff usually make sure that pupils learn things in a progressive way so that they steadily build up new skills. There is, however, room for more challenge for some of the more able pupils, especially in aspects of writing and mathematics. A few lessons are dull and these do not inspire pupils to be motivated to learn in the best possible way. The school has a sound capacity for further development. From the sample of work seen, lessons and assessment information, standards are on track to rise again this year by the end of Year 6, so that they are much closer to what is expected. From pupils' very low starting point, this shows satisfactory achievement. Leaders are keen to raise standards still further. They have accurately identified that pupils lack sufficient opportunities to edit and extend their writing. They also know that pupils do not do enough real-life mathematical problem solving. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, there is not enough consistently good teaching and learning to raise standards quickly.

Changes to the curriculum and good pastoral care have added to pupils' enjoyment of school and their satisfactory wider personal development. Pupils are delighted by the increased range of clubs, extra activities and visits. These contribute especially well to pupils' good fitness and increase their contribution to the community. Pupils are generally polite and leaders and staff have worked effectively to make sure that pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is improving but is still too low.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the headteacher joined the school, she identified some inadequacies in provision. As a result of good leadership the provision has improved substantially. The impact of new initiatives and the staff's greater confidence and skills in teaching are helping to lift standards. Children's achievement is now good. An increase in the number of Nursery places means that more children

benefit from being in school for a longer time. Standards are improving. Prior to 2008, children went into Year 1 with exceptionally low-level skills. Now, their skills and knowledge are only slightly below that expected by the end of Reception. This reflects good progress from children's very low starting points.

Teaching is good and this leads to children learning new things quickly. They enjoy a good balance between teacher-directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. There is a strong focus on promoting children's speaking skills. Relationships are very good and this helps children to behave well and work and play in a friendly and confident way with others. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is effective. However, opportunities are missed to link reading and writing to a wide range of different activities. Children's welfare is given a high priority. Teaching assistants effectively support children and rigorous assessment procedures are used to check their progress. Strong links with parents ensure that children settle into school life quickly. Parents value information meetings about such things as how the school teaches literacy skills, and they would like more of these sessions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to become at least good, ensuring that lessons are always interesting and challenging for all abilities.
- Lift standards in writing and mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to edit and improve their work, and to work on more investigations and real-life problem solving in mathematics.
- Improve attendance.

A small proportion of the 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

Achievement is satisfactory and has improved well in the last year. For example, strengths include the good progress in some Year 3 and 5 classes and the consistently good progress in both Year 6 classes. The extra catch-up group activities also contribute to pupils' improving achievement. Prior to 2008, boys had not performed well in mathematics and English. The additional group work is helping them to understand basic mathematical skills, and they also note that they like reading more. They said, 'The new books are interesting.' Those learning English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties are identified early and given suitable support which leads to satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

Following a significant low in 2007, standards started to rise in 2008. The proportion of pupils now reaching the level expected is increasing well in all year groups. In Year 6, standards are currently on track to be broadly as expected in reading and mathematics but writing standards are still below average. There is room for pupils to be doing better still. Pupils are not yet editing and extending their written work enough and they are also not doing enough real-life mathematical problem solving to lift standards to higher levels by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning. As a result, their attendance is rising, although it is still not as high as it should be to ensure that pupils can make the best of their education. Pupils commented that, 'Trips and visits are fun', and they like the increased opportunities that there are for these and also for them to develop their sporting skills and fitness. They relish the sporting competitions and are doing well in events such as Croydon girls' cross-country and basketball tournaments. Year 5 pupils are excited about meeting and making a television presentation with Andy and Jamie Murray, the famous tennis players, to promote fitness. Pupils know quite a lot about how to eat healthily but, when faced with a choice, they often find it hard to choose the healthy option.

Most pupils behave well, although a few pupils demonstrate more challenging behaviour; this does not have a significant impact on others. Pupils are pleased that efforts that have been made to improve behaviour. Pupils know about different cultures and faiths. The school knows that not enough is done to enrich pupils' spiritual development. Pupils enjoy doing things for the wider community. For example, they grow vegetables on the adjoining allotment, they sing in local concerts and older pupils help the younger ones in the playground. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning basic academic skills and they make good progress in their social skills and in learning how to be enterprising. The pupils have researched, raised funds for and marketed a superb 'Leavers Book', for all Year 6 pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Effective training has helped teachers and assistants to increase their skills and raise their expectations of pupils' capabilities. In 2007, much of the teaching was judged by the school leadership to be inadequate. It has improved well and it is now satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and older pupils in some Year 3 and 5 classes. Teaching is consistently good in Year 6. However, in the school as a whole, there is not enough consistently good or outstanding teaching and learning to help pupils to make very quick progress. Overall, teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subjects being taught and they make sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning. Pupils work steadily and almost always respond positively to teachers' clear and informative explanations and instructions. Teachers ask thought-provoking questions to check that pupils understand what they are learning. Occasionally, teaching is a bit dull and when this occurs, pupils' interest and concentration wanes. Tasks are usually matched to pupils' capabilities but sometimes the most able pupils could be given more challenging things to do. Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who have learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum contributes satisfactorily to pupils' personal development and enables them to make steady progress. Provision for English, mathematics and science is satisfactory and is improving well. Pupils have more opportunities to read than previously and they enjoy special

project weeks. The school has appropriately prioritised developing aspects of writing and mathematics, where there are some important weaknesses. The school is effectively adapting the curriculum to motivate and inspire boys more. Topics such as pirates, robots and sport are good examples of this. Links with Crystal Palace Study Support Centre also motivate all pupils well, especially boys. Links between subjects are strengthening and these add relevance and meaning to learning. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote persuasive writing on why to visit Australia, which linked well to English and geography work. Popular clubs include many sports, African drumming, dance, choir and martial arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Staff respond to pupils' concerns promptly and they link well with outside agencies to support and guide pupils and their families. Vulnerable pupils are very sensitively supported on a one-to-one basis outside lessons. However, in lessons, there is variation in the quality of support given and leaders know that it is not good enough to promote consistently good progress. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous. Pupils' attendance is rising but remains too low to ensure that they all make the best of their education. There has been a rigorous focus on helping Gypsy Roma pupils to grow in self-esteem and this is helping them to attend more often. Their attendance, like that of some other pupils, remains erratic. The good project on 'Strengthening Families and Strengthening Communities', which involves different agencies working with vulnerable families, is helping to raise achievement.

Teachers often mark pupils' work well, so that they know how to improve, although this practice is not yet fully consistent and pupils' work is not always neatly presented. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and this evaluation is helping to ensure that individuals are given support if they make slow progress. As a result of improved systems to help pupils to behave appropriately, exclusions have reduced, pupils are happier and behaviour is now satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is leading the school well and this is reflected in the many recent improvements that have been made to care, assessments, teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Senior managers confirm that the headteacher has empowered them to grow in confidence and be more proactive, so that they take on greater responsibilities and they are developing their roles well, although there is still more to do. Rigorous action is being taken to eradicate inadequate teaching and this is a result of accurate self-evaluation, careful monitoring, largely by the headteacher, and good support from outside agencies. Links with a very experienced headteacher, as part of the 'London Challenge' initiative, contribute effectively to the development of leadership skills. Teamwork has improved, and as senior leaders note, 'The general atmosphere is more positive.' The school has set good targets to improve performance, but there is room for more challenging targets for pupils to reach higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The governors keenly support the school and are now asking more incisive questions about its work. Together, leaders are working successfully to reduce the high overspend, which was evident when the headteacher joined the school. Particular strengths of community cohesion include inter-cultural events and a project to reduce gang culture in the local area.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
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	2
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**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heavers Farm Primary School, South Norwood, SE25 6LT

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for telling us about your school. I am writing to let you know what we have found.

You go to a satisfactory school. The teachers and other adults help you to enjoy learning new things. Your school has improved considerably in the last year and we especially like the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff care about you. You are especially pleased to have more sporting opportunities, have the chance to join interesting clubs and go on visits. Because teachers mostly give you the right kind of work to do we are pleased to tell you that most of you are learning the things that will get you ready for secondary school. So, please continue to try your best. The teachers make most activities interesting. We are very pleased that so many of you are trying to behave well and more of you are coming to school every day? please keep it up. For those of you who find it hard to behave well or who do not always come to school every day please try very hard to improve this. Well done for working hard on your reading. It was lovely to hear about your gardening and community activities. Your headteacher and all other adults are keen to make the school even better and they agree that the following things need to be done to improve.

- Give you more good lessons that are exciting and challenging.
- Help you to improve your written work so that more of you know exactly how to make it even better. Also, give you more opportunities to do mathematical investigations that help you to understand interesting real-life problem solving.
- Make sure that even more of you come to school every day.

It was lovely to meet you and good luck in the future. I hope that Year 5 enjoyed meeting the famous tennis players, Andy and Jamie Murray; maybe it will inspire you to try this sport next! We all loved the special 'Leavers Book'; this shows real enterprise and will be a lasting memory of happy times at school for Year 6.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector