

Harold Court Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102278
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	323611
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Pickles

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	297
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	Cllr J Coles
Headteacher	Mrs B Swain
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Harold Wood Romford RM3 0SH
Telephone number	01708 342275
Fax number	01708 342275

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harold Court is a larger than average primary school which takes most of its pupils from the local area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, predominantly moderate learning difficulties, is well below average. A new headteacher has been in post since April 2009.

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 (3) 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. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and learning, to ensure pupils make progress which reflects their abilities and capabilities.

Standards are broadly average but not all pupils are making the progress they should. This is because the tracking and assessment of pupils' progress have previously lacked rigour. As a result, work has not been matched closely enough to pupils' different capabilities. This has had a negative impact, particularly on the progress of the more able pupils, who have generally not attained as well as they could. Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. By contrast, pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in their learning because of interventions and support which are appropriately matched to their abilities. Work is marked regularly but does not explain to pupils what they need to do to improve their work further. The curriculum responds to the interests of pupils and supports their enjoyment of learning, particularly the range of clubs and sporting opportunities.

The headteacher has demonstrated insightful and decisive leadership, and the improvements to the way the school is led and managed are having an impact. The team responsible for raising standards, made up of senior leaders, has a clear view of the school's strengths and has already made several key improvements. Rigorous tracking and assessment systems have been established which provide an accurate picture of pupils' progress and attainment. The school was able quickly to identify pupils at risk of underachieving in Year 6. Additional support was provided for them which successfully raised their attainment. The school has accurately identified that the quality of teaching needs to improve further to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils. Subject leaders now monitor their subject areas and observe lessons, sharing the responsibility for ensuring that pupils make better progress. Leaders and managers at all levels have a realistic picture of the next steps needed to secure improvement. Well-focused support from the local authority has improved governors' ability to provide challenge and they are now able to hold the school to account for its performance. Together, these show the school's satisfactory capacity for improvement.

The school provides a caring and safe environment, which parents and pupils appreciate. Pupils enjoy being at the school, and work and play together harmoniously. They have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe and of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy lessons where there are practical activities and when, as one pupil said, 'you can do things'. Pupils attend school regularly. Parents are supportive of the school and, of the questionnaires that were returned, the large majority were wholly positive. As one parent commented, 'The pupils are well behaved and the teachers are encouraging and enthusiastic as well as caring.' Parents are positive about the increased communication between home and school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Reception classes with skills and capabilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. The majority of children achieve the goals for children of that age in all areas of learning by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching overall is satisfactory because planned activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for groups and individual children. Relationships are secure and most children are confident learners and readily talk to adults or to each other. Children's personal development is good. Adults provide suitable routines so that children develop appropriate levels of independence.

The quality of the outdoor environment enhances children's enjoyment of learning. Activities are planned effectively to provide children with opportunities to develop and use communication and mathematical skills. This was seen when children were using money to buy and sell ice creams from the beach shop, as part of the seaside theme. Children are encouraged to drink water and snack-time is used to reinforce healthy eating, which supports their good personal development and well-being. Reception classes provide a safe learning environment where children are looked after and gain confidence. Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children's progress is accurately tracked and child-led activities are matched to children's interests and stages of development. Parents are regularly kept informed of their child's development and welfare.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by using assessment information more effectively to plan lessons which challenge pupils at all ability levels.
- Use outcomes from monitoring and evaluation to address weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Ensure that pupils are aware of their progress and are given more information about how they can improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are broadly average but progress is inadequate, as pupils have not been achieving as well as they should be, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In 2008, the most recent year for which national comparisons are available, pupils made significantly less progress than expected and this has been the case since 2006. Unvalidated results for 2009 indicate that attainment at the higher levels has fallen in English and mathematics and that pupils have not made adequate progress from their above-average attainment at the end of Year 2. Progress across Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory in reading, but slower in writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because their needs are being identified earlier and they are benefiting from planned intervention strategies. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress from attainment on entry, which is in line with national expectations. The school is now using accurate tracking data more effectively to identify and target pupils to ensure that previous underachievement is addressed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to their lessons and behave well in class and around the school. They say that they feel safe and have confidence that any concerns they have will be addressed

by the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding is good and they appreciate the cultural diversity of their school and local community. They are respectful towards each other and adults in school and display positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Pupils enjoy coming to school and share a sense of belonging in the school community. They make a positive contribution through the decisions they make with the school council and by acting as monitors. They particularly enjoyed having the opportunity to raise money to buy playground equipment. Pupils make a positive contribution to their local community, for example when the choir visits the local residential home. Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular and sporting activities and participation rates are high. They understand how being active and having a balanced diet contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate, although some satisfactory and good lessons were observed. Relationships in lessons are good and pupils are motivated. However, there are important weaknesses in the way pupils' learning is managed. Planning does not always give sufficient attention to what pupils already know, which means that activities are planned which lack challenge and too often display low expectations. The match of work in lessons is not sufficiently good enough to ensure that pupils learn in line with their capabilities and starting points. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons, but these do not sufficiently reflect the skills and knowledge that the pupils need in order to make progress. Good learning was seen where teachers engaged pupils through effective questioning which assessed understanding and extended thinking. Pupils' work is regularly marked but the marking does not provide sufficient guidance about what pupils need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is currently being revised to extend cross-curricular links between subjects. The good range of after-school clubs boosts pupils' enjoyment and adds breadth to the curriculum. A comprehensive programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education ensures that children know how to stay healthy and safe and supports their good personal development. The provision for information and communication technology is underdeveloped, an area which the school has identified and taken prompt action to address by increasing the number of interactive whiteboards in classrooms. The school recognises that the provision for gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped, which reduces the progress that they make, and have taken action to address this. Transition arrangements are satisfactory and the school has now implemented systems to ensure that pupils make sustained progress as they transfer from one key stage to the next.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a caring and supportive environment for its pupils. Systems for the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties, and a range of interventions, are in place and their impact monitored. The school makes good use of its links with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties. Risk assessments and policies are up to date and safeguarding

procedures meet statutory requirements. Procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are satisfactory and the school has taken prompt action to reduce authorised absences, which were higher than average. The school has accurately identified that work is regularly marked but that marking does not provide sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their learning and make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and demonstrates that leaders and governors have an accurate view of where improvements are needed. The school acknowledges that the necessary improvements since the last inspection have not been implemented as swiftly as they should have been and has taken prompt action to address areas of previous underperformance. Members of the restructured leadership team have a clear understanding of their roles and now regularly monitor the quality of provision and are accountable for their areas of responsibility.

The school's actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not yet had sufficient time to embed. However, there is consistent use of learning objectives and better use of activities which engage pupils and support enjoyment of learning. Monitoring of the impact of planned initiatives against clearly measurable success criteria is robust, and planning for improvement is realistic and appropriately timed. The school's use of challenging targets to raise standards has been revised to reflect more accurately pupils' progress and expected levels of attainment. The school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils and makes a good contribution to developing children's understanding of community cohesion at school and for the local community. Plans are in place to extend this to a national and global level. Governors provide satisfactory challenge, have improved their monitoring of the school's performance and demonstrate increased awareness of their role in holding the school to account.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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?	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
The extent to which 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	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?	4
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	4
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harold Court Primary School, Romford, RM3 0SH

Thank you for making us so welcome on our recent visit to your school. Your school is improving but needs to do some things much better to make sure that you all make as much progress as you should. Because of this, we have given it what is called a 'Notice to Improve'.

We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and life at the school and the inspectors were very impressed by your polite and helpful behaviour. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you enjoy lessons where you do practical activities and lessons where the work is not too easy. We know that you feel safe in school and that the headteacher and staff care for you and help you if you have a problem.

We have asked the school to make sure that the activities you do in lessons are matched to your different abilities. For some of you, this means making sure the work is not too easy. We have asked the headteacher to make sure all teachers are helping you to make as much progress as you can. We have also asked the teachers to give you more information about what you need to do to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to come to school whenever you can, to work hard in lessons and to behave well.

Yours faithfully

Linda Pickles

Lead Inspector