

Heathfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103329
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323802
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Wallis-Maclean

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)	467
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	Madge Bartley
Headteacher	Alexandra Powell-Williams
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Heathfield Road Handsworth Birmingham B19 1HJ
Telephone number	01214 646474
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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

Heathfield Primary is a larger than average school. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from an Asian or Asian-British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children start school in the maintained nursery and complete their Early Years Foundation Stage education in the two Reception classes. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and an Inclusion Award. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent due to post-operative recovery and the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Heathfield Primary School is an outstanding and extremely effective school providing an excellent education for all its pupils. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff and governors, pupils make outstanding progress. Although the headteacher was absent during the inspection, her high aspirations and influence were tangible throughout the school. The headteacher is ably and loyally supported by the deputy headteacher who demonstrated excellent leadership qualities in her role as acting headteacher, leading the school during the inspection. Pupils love being at school and the school looks after them extremely well. The vast majority of parents hold the school in very high regard. Typical responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were: 'I have four children in this school; they all love it, which makes me happy,' 'My child loves this school, waking up early shouting out "school is today";' and, 'The school cares and provides a holistic approach to a child's learning and my child has benefited from this.'

The majority of children start school with very limited knowledge of English and a narrower-than-usual range of skills and experiences, but despite this they go on to make a successful start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made excellent progress to reach standards that are in line with the national average. The rich curriculum, exemplary pastoral care and timely, effective interventions that break down the barriers to pupils' learning are the reasons why pupils make outstanding progress in this school.

Teaching is good. Teachers use a range of strategies to support pupils in their learning. This includes those strategies focused on engaging boys more positively to promote their good learning, which is reducing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls. Teaching assistants and non-class-based staff are used very effectively, creating a highly successful partnership with teachers that promote pupils' excellent progress. Teachers do not always use assessment of pupils' learning to consistently set high standards, especially for the most able pupils. The quality of marking is also inconsistent. The best practice gives pupils an effective understanding of how to improve and reach higher standards but this is not yet fully embedded in all classes.

Outstanding relationships across the school and the well-focused curriculum promote pupils' personal development and well-being exceptionally well. An exciting range of activities are provided which promote pupils' outstanding attitudes and enjoyment in their work. Even so, a small proportion of pupils do not attend regularly and despite the school's strong focus on improving attendance, it remains only satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to engage all parents in reducing absence so that all pupils are able to attain higher standards to reach their full potential. The school accurately identifies what it needs to do to continue to improve, to sustain its outstanding achievement and to begin to drive up standards. There are excellent partnerships with parents and close links to the local community and beyond. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding as this has been an unswerving and passionate goal of the headteacher and governors.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start in the Nursery and the Reception classes with knowledge and skills well below that expected for their age. Children settle well into Nursery and make excellent progress under the skilled and sensitive care of all the adults. They continue to make good progress in Reception to reach standards that are in line with similar schools. Teaching is good and children are helped to learn through a broad and balanced curriculum which stimulates their interest and encourages them to develop in all areas of learning. Activities are well balanced between teacher-led tasks and opportunities for children to experiment and explore for themselves. Children in the Nursery have benefited from a small outside area where activities can be extended. The outside learning environment for Reception children is limited to the use of the playground to which all resources have to be carried. The school recognises this is an area for improvement and money has been set aside for further development.

Children's safety and care are at the heart of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Strong links are made with parents before children start school and staff are available every day to give support and talk to parents, building a rounded picture of the child's development. Teaching assistants provide bilingual support for families which aids good communication and children feel secure and positive about learning. Workshops for parents help them to understand how to help their child at home and to develop their own knowledge and skills. The strong links with parents and sensitive support provides the basis for children's good personal development and preparation for learning. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff work well as a strong team, sharing expertise and ideas in planning for all aspects of children's development. The work of the Early Years Foundation Stage is evaluated carefully and areas for further improvement identified correctly.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to raise standards, ensure that all pupils are given consistently high targets to reach in their work and all teachers' marking supports pupils' understanding of how to improve.
- Work further with parents to ensure all pupils attend school regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress as a result of excellent intervention strategies, high quality pastoral care and a stimulating and rich curriculum which enables pupils to really enjoy learning. Although standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are below the national average, they achieve significantly above other schools with similar characteristics. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the national average. Mathematics has been a relatively weak subject but here too, progress is outstanding and standards are rising. Pupils of all ethnic groups achieve extremely well and although boys' standards are still below those of the girls, they also achieve extremely well. The small group of more able pupils make good progress but it is not as effective as those of lower ability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. Pupils understand themselves, knowing how their actions affect others. They have a developing curiosity about their place in the world and are developing the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need for their future well-being. They are acquiring a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the rights and responsibilities of being members of families and communities, locally, nationally and globally. This is developed, for example, through their involvement with the Youth Parliament. Pupils have a growing respect for their own culture and that of others; they have a very good awareness of the value of a healthy diet and regular exercise and use this knowledge extremely well to make positive choices. Pupils are very aware of their safety and use strategies to stay safe effectively both in school and in their community. They thoroughly enjoy being in school and want to do well. Their behaviour is good although occasionally boys can be dominant in certain situations whilst girls remain passive. Pupils support a range of charities and are involved well in the local community. Their good achievement sets a solid foundation for their future and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, leading to effective learning. Lessons are well planned, identifying different groups of learners and appropriate levels of work. Teachers work hard to make learning fun and relevant. For example, a good Year 5 lesson used current affairs to develop pupils' literacy skills and challenge their existing knowledge. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, with effective use of questioning to challenge and extend learning. Behaviour in lessons is good as a result of very good relationships and positive management strategies. Teaching assistants and non-class-based staff are used extremely effectively, working with identified groups of pupils such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those in the early stages of learning English. The use of target setting and marking is inconsistent, however. When it is good, it provides pupils with the information they need to take responsibility for their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets the personal and learning needs of the pupils exceptionally well. Activities are adapted well to support pupils' different learning abilities, especially those with English as an additional language or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum provides an exciting range of activities and areas of learning to explore which promotes pupils' outstanding attitudes and enjoyment in their work. All the school's work is strongly underpinned by the importance of pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development, resulting in an impressive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and an awareness of keeping healthy and staying safe. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, extensive visits and visitors, which extend pupils' experiences and knowledge of the world. Older pupils, for example, go on residential trips with pupils from other schools that have a significantly different range of cultures and

ethnic backgrounds. This promotes their greater awareness, respect and understanding of others. Additional activities such as Science Week and Book Week also enhance pupils' enjoyment and first-hand experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

High quality care, guidance and support are evident in pupils' good achievement, very positive attitudes and excellent personal development. Adults know the pupils extremely well, willingly listening and responding to their concerns and anxieties. As a result of this, pupils feel safe and secure. The appointment of a member of staff to support vulnerable pupils has been highly effective. The innovative use of a range of inclusion strategies, including nurture and resilience, peer massage, 'wake and shake up' and 'meet and greet' at the beginning of the day provide all pupils with excellent opportunities to develop. Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements. Academic guidance is good and pupils have targets for their next stages of learning. Many pupils know how to achieve them, but they are not yet consistently applied across the whole school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

'The head is everything you would want in a headteacher.' This is one of many comments made by pupils, parents, governors and staff that demonstrate the headteacher's outstanding passion for, and commitment to, the school she leads. Her determination to drive improvement has been relentless. With her team of staff, particularly the deputy headteacher and two new appointments to the leadership team, she has created a rich and exciting environment where pupils' achievement is celebrated and displayed. The leadership team, including the governors, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This and the good improvements in the past demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. The school values community cohesion and sets it as a priority. Its vision for promoting community cohesion is very strong and its implementation enriches the pupils' understanding of others, promoting a respect for diversity and broadening their horizons. The governors are well informed and aware of the need to develop their role as 'critical friends' in the process of improving standards.

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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heathfield Primary School, Birmingham, B19 1HJ

The inspectors who recently visited your school would like to thank you all for talking to us and showing us how well you are doing. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a really excellent school.

Here are some of the good things we found out about your school.

- You make a good start to your schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make excellent progress and reach standards in Year 6 that are expected for your age.
- You help to make your school a happy one by behaving well and looking after each other. You understand the importance of staying healthy. You eat sensibly and enjoy taking part in physical exercise.
- Teaching is good. Teachers work hard to make your lessons exciting and interesting and you try hard to do well in your work.
- All the staff look after you extremely well. Everyone works together and there is an excellent partnership with your parents and others who can help you.
- You learn a lot from your interesting activities that help you to gain a very good understanding of, and respect for, other people in the world. The school has lovely displays of your work.
- Your headteacher and the senior staff work very hard to make your school a great place to be.

We have asked Mrs Powell-Williams, your teachers and the governors to improve two things.

- Help you reach even higher standards by challenging you more and helping you to understand how to improve.
- Make sure that your parents and carers get you to school on school days.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and remember you can help by continuing to work hard.

Best Wishes

Susie Wallis-Maclean Lead inspector