

# Hatfield Heath Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114878
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326079
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Glynn Storer

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	198
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	12
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs D Hancock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Clements
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hatfield Heath Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM22 7EA

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated:

- How well the school has succeeded in halting the slight downturn in standards in writing, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Whether the school strengthened academic guidance for pupils and curriculum provision for cultural development and, if so, the extent to which such developments contribute to pupils' understanding of their learning and progress and to the school's efforts to promote community cohesion.
- Whether leadership and management structures are sufficiently robust to ensure that standards and quality are maintained during a phase of transition in staffing and in the senior leadership team.

Evidence was gathered from classroom visits and from discussions with staff, pupils and governors. The inspector also examined pupils' work and school documents, especially assessment and safeguarding information. 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 form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves the community of Hatfield Heath in Essex, though many pupils come from further afield. Most are from White British families. None of the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils known to qualify for free school meals is well below that in schools nationally. Children's attainments on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are generally above those normally expected of four-year-olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national average. The school has experienced a particularly high turnover of staff during the last year; newly qualified teachers have replaced experienced staff, including senior leaders, who have left the school.

The school holds the following nationally accredited awards for aspects of its work: Activemark, Healthy Schools and Eco Schools (bronze).

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Hatfield Heath Community Primary School provides an excellent education for its pupils, most of who attain exceptionally high standards in relation to both their academic and personal development. Most parents hold the school in high regard. Comments, such as: 'This is an exceptional school that has provided our children with a superb education.' and 'Great teachers, fantastic staff and extremely well led and managed...' are typical of the views of many.

The school has undergone a high turnover of staff during the last year. It is a testimony to the strength of the school's leadership that these changes have not deflected the school from its core purpose of providing the best possible quality of education for its pupils. Governors have also played a major part, through their rigorous approach to overseeing the school's work and to the appointment of new staff. The headteacher has strong educational views and principles. He communicates these clearly to all staff and, in doing so, gives an extremely clear direction to the work of the school. One parent wrote, 'The leadership of the headteacher oozes down to all staff....' In this time of transition, he is aided by the school's strong and highly effective management systems. Existing leaders and managers at all levels have well-established roles in school self-evaluation and in planning for school improvement. However, newly qualified staff do not yet have the experience to take on management roles. They are still fully occupied in honing their classroom practice. Nevertheless, because the mentoring and monitoring of recently appointed staff are extremely effective, they have quickly become part of the team. They have the potential to take on subject leadership roles as they become more experienced. This will be important in order to secure the development of subjects across the whole curriculum. The school sets highly challenging targets for pupils and staff alike, and the principle of accountability is thoroughly embedded. Consequently, there has been no let-up in the drive to maintain both standards and quality. The pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the school's work and the strong focus on developing the staff team give it an extremely strong capacity to improve further. The school provides excellent value for money.

Standards are exceptionally high throughout the school. Children get off to a flying start to their education in EYFS and make excellent progress throughout Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, virtually all pupils attain the expected standard for their age and a high proportion exceeds national expectations. The school has been tackling issues relating to standards in writing and early indications from the 2008 assessments indicate that these initiatives are having a strongly positive impact. Standards in writing have risen considerably from those of 2007 and are, like other core subjects, significantly higher than generally found in schools nationally. Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Key Stage 2. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils based on their Key Stage 1 results but the nearer pupils get to 'the winning post', the more the school raises its expectations. Consequently, many pupils make more than the expected rate of progress. By the end of Year 6, standards in all core subjects are exceptionally high and pupils' achievements over time are outstanding.

Pupils learn exceptionally well, because teaching and the curriculum are outstanding. Lessons engage pupils' interest and the pace of learning is brisk. Teachers manage pupils exceptionally well. They establish excellent patterns of behaviour and response because their expectations are high. They plan work that challenges pupils both intellectually and personally and so promotes excellent progress. They use the information that they gain from regular assessments to set targets that personalise pupils' learning and help them to improve. A strong feature of several lessons was the way in which teachers used references to learning objectives and targets

to bring the best out of pupils and to motivate them to succeed. The curriculum is exceptionally rich. It fully meets national curriculum requirements. Particular strengths lie in the high quality learning experiences provided for all pupils. These enliven every term and do much to promote positive attitudes, enjoyment and achievement across the curriculum. They include educational visits to local woodlands, a Hindu temple and the Imperial War Museum, as well as visitors and special events in school, such as multi-cultural music.

Pastoral care is of a high quality. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and have confidence in the adults who care for them. The school has a strong focus on promoting pupils' emotional well-being and provides excellent support for pupils and families who are in any way vulnerable. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being in school are rigorous and thorough. Academic guidance is also highly effective. Challenging personal targets and regular reviews ensure that pupils know exactly how well they are doing and are highly motivated to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive sensitive care that ensures that they have access to all the school has to offer and progress at a similar rate to other pupils. The school is also highly effective in promoting pupils' special gifts or talents, for example, through its association with local sporting and drama groups and links with the Royal Ballet School.

Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education also permeates the curriculum. This results in outstanding outcomes in terms of pupils' personal development and well-being and in the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils show respect and courtesy to others, and their behaviour is excellent. Consequently, the school functions as an extremely harmonious community, with school councillors and play leaders making strong contributions. Pupils also contribute to the wider community, for example through links with local old folks. Furthermore, constructive links with and support by parents, for example, in celebrating Thanksgiving and Diwali, in eco-projects and other international initiatives, strengthen pupils' understanding and respect for peoples from other cultures and walks of life. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development has strengthened since the last inspection. Pupils are also extremely well versed in safe and healthy lifestyles. Most develop an excellent work ethic. They work hard, strive to succeed and show pride in their achievements. These attributes, along with the high standards that they attain, equip them exceptionally well for their continuing education and for their lives as young adults.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Hatfield Heath Primary has outstanding EYFS provision. All staff have a thorough understanding of how to create a fun-filled and welcoming environment that challenges children and promotes highly effective learning. Children thrive in the Reception class, make excellent progress and attain standards that are well above those normally expected of five-year-olds. The close liaison between parents and school ensures a seamless entry into Early Years. The strength of this partnership lies in very good communication through, for example the home-school diary, coffee mornings and workshops for parents on how their children learn, that aid children's smooth transition to Year 1.

Welfare and safety within Early Years are well established. Safeguarding requirements are fully met, ensuring that children feel extremely happy and safe. Personal development is outstanding and enables all learners to reach their potential. Even at this young age children know what will make them healthy. During snack times, children's use of the well-organised tuck shop and fruit-for-all prompts good discussion on healthy eating. The Early Years team's drive to develop independence and raise children's self-esteem really works. As a result, children love to take

part in games and imaginative play in the well-resourced spaces such as the 'office' and the 'home' corner. The outside classroom offers opportunity for a wide range of games and activities to enable children to experience the wider world at first hand.

Two experienced teachers, supported by two very effective, teaching assistants, manage the provision with care and rigour. The well-planned curriculum gives challenging opportunities for children to achieve well in all areas of learning. Teaching is outstanding. The buzz of activity in the classroom indicates children's love of learning. There were looks of wide-eyed amazement and excited conversations when children explored the conkers and leaves collected from a visit to a local park. Staff plan all activities with the uniqueness of the child in mind and promote a sense of teamwork. The system of recording evidence of children's attainments electronically gives staff a very effective visual check on individual achievement and needs.

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

- Re-establish subject leadership across the curriculum when newly qualified teachers have the necessary experience to take on management roles.

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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?	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	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hatfield Heath Community Primary School, Bishop's Stortford CM22 7EA

You may remember that I visited your school a little while ago, along with my colleague Mrs Kauffman. Thank you for making us so welcome and for taking time to talk to us and to answer our questions. I particularly enjoyed talking to Year 5 about their 'Big Writing' and seeing the school council at work, and I know that Mrs Kauffman had fun in Reception.

I thought that you would like to hear what we found out about your school.

There are many outstandingly good things happening in your school.

- Almost all of you make excellent progress in English, mathematics and science and overall standards are very high.
- You thoroughly enjoy school because teachers, educational visits, visitors and special events make learning exceptionally interesting and enjoyable.
- You get on wonderfully well with one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe and give you excellent advice about your work.
- Mr Clements, the staff, governors and pupils work hard to make your school a better place.

There is not much that needs to be improved at Hatfield Heath Primary but Mr Clements wants everything to be perfect. That is why your school is so good. I know that you have recently had several new teachers. Therefore, I have suggested that, when they have settled in, it will be important for them to take on jobs as subject leaders. Then they too can join in the drive to improve the school. You can help by doing all you can to welcome and help your new teachers.

I hope that you will all continue to work hard and enjoy your time at Hatfield Heath Community Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector