

# Heather Ridge Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125017
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	328264
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Coussins

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	177
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Louise Nicholls
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2006
<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>	Martindale Avenue Heatherside Estate Camberley GU15 1AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01276 24918
<b>Fax number</b>	01276 675881

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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 the following issues:

- the extent to which the school has improved creative areas of learning in its curriculum
- the impact of target setting in literacy and mathematics.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records, lesson observations and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

Heather Ridge is a similar size to most other infant schools. A very large majority of children are from White British backgrounds. The largest other groups are from mixed, Asian or other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is below average. There are 60 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and they are taught in two Reception classes. The school was awarded Healthy School status in 2007. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school of which, staff, governors, pupils and parents are justifiably very proud. Within a caring ethos that permeates all aspects of school life, pupils are valued and cherished as individuals. Consequently, they flourish and are eager to do well. Parents are very pleased with what the school offers their children. One parent wrote, 'The welcome, care, enthusiasm and results obtained from the team at Heather Ridge confirm to me that we made the right choice and have an excellent school.' Achievement is outstanding and, as a result, standards are exceptionally and consistently high by the time pupils leave the school. The emphasis the school gives to meeting the differing needs of every child is exemplary and is a major factor in its success. The excellent care, guidance and support make a very positive contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They develop as very well-rounded individuals who are happy and confident. Attendance is above average and indicates how much pupils enjoy coming to school. One Year 2 boy said, 'The school is great, I can't think of anything that would make it better.' Behaviour is excellent and pupils are very friendly, enthusiastic and well mannered. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council is very active. It relishes its responsibilities and takes them very seriously. Pupils feel very safe and secure, and say that they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They understand exceptionally well the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. There are excellent relationships throughout the school. The outstanding level of pupils' personal and basic skills means that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The children join the school in the Reception Year with abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for four-year-olds. They reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Very effective intervention and support is given to pupils to ensure that they all have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds, abilities or particular learning needs. As a result, pupils with speech, language and communication needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others, often because of the very valuable contribution made by teaching assistants. Excellent teaching and knowledge of individual children leads to high achievement, academically and personally. The academic and personal progress that each child makes is carefully tracked so that challenging targets are set and reviewed regularly. Pupils know their targets and how they can improve their work to achieve them.

The school recently and correctly identified the need for a greater emphasis on creativity in the otherwise good curriculum. Planning includes more exciting and meaningful activities to promote independent learning, and more use of the outdoor areas for learning. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic and learn very effectively when they have opportunities to solve problems and carry out their own investigations, and when they are actively engaged in their lessons. This was seen to very good effect in Year 2 lessons when pupils were involved in role-play activities to help their understanding of characters in traditional tales. Writing is comparatively weaker than reading at the higher Level 3 (this is one level above that expected of Year 2 pupils), as there have been fewer opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively in all subjects. However, the positive developments in the curriculum and well-devised staff training are improving opportunities for pupils to write more extensively across the curriculum. The displays of artwork around the school are very impressive and of a high standard. There is

now scope to provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning tasks and research, as this is not consistent across the curriculum.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. In a short period of time, the headteacher has identified key priorities for school improvement as a result of her robust and very effective monitoring and evaluation procedures, and is determined that the school will not rest on its laurels. She has a very clear view of the school's strengths and initiatives to develop - for example, extending the opportunities for pupils to engage as effectively with the wider, global community as they do within the local community. The impact of her work is already helping to improve the curriculum. For example, the focus on pupils learning their letter sounds has led to greater consistency across classes in their reading and writing. She is very well supported by a strong team of established staff who say they are excited, inspired and motivated by the headteacher to move the school forward. Parents commented on their confidence in the headteacher. One wrote, 'The new head has continued to maintain the positive feeling and atmosphere within the school.' The governing body provides excellent strategic leadership, supports the school very well and holds it to account most effectively for its performance. Parents support the school exceptionally well. They raise significant funds for the school, and many help in school and share their skills and knowledge with the pupils. The school has successfully achieved the improvement point from the previous inspection by increasing the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are very competent and enthusiastic ICT users, and are especially motivated by the interactive whiteboards, which are in all classes. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective and clearly demonstrates its relentless drive for excellence and its outstanding capacity for further improvement from its existing secure and successful position. One parent's comment is typical of many: 'This school is a wonderful asset to the community. We are extremely lucky to live in its catchment area.'

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes because their individual needs are met so well. A parent wrote, 'We are delighted with our daughter's first term. She loves going to school, has made many friends and adores her teachers.' Children make very good progress from starting points that are in line with expectations for their age. By the end of the EYFS, the vast majority exceed the goals expected for their age in all areas except their creative development. They achieve exceptionally well in their learning and their personal, social and emotional development because of excellent teaching and very effective provision for their welfare. They are very confident and articulate, and can express their thoughts and ideas very well through the spoken word; they make better progress in this area than they do in their writing. All staff work extremely well together to create an environment where children can thrive, and are rightly focused on developing the outside areas. The EYFS is very well led and managed by the headteacher and the EYFS leader. Checks on children's progress are very thorough, and the impact of the provision is very effectively evaluated to identify the strengths and areas for further development. Relationships between staff and children and their parents are very positive and trusting. Parents are very appreciative of the care taken by the school to ensure the children settle very well. One parent wrote, 'My child has taken to school very well, and I believe this is because of their welcoming and caring attitude.'

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

- Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with more opportunities to engage in independent learning tasks and research, including the use of the outdoor areas.

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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

<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?	2
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	1
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?	2
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**

26 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heather Ridge Infant School, Camberley, GU15 1AY

I am writing to let you know how much my colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you all for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your learning, and telling us what you think about your school. We agree with you and your parents that your school is outstanding, and these are the reasons why.

- You told us that you really like being at school and love all the different things you can do.
- You are doing extremely well in lessons, and by the time you leave you are very good at reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your teachers know you very well and help you learn new things very quickly.
- You are very well behaved, and it was great to see you get on so well together and help each other in your work and your play.
- Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best.
- Your headteacher does an excellent job in running the school and knows how to make it even better in the future.

We have asked the school to carry on looking at ways to make all the things you are taught even more exciting, in your classrooms and in all the outside areas, so that you have more opportunities to find things out for yourselves.

We were very impressed with all the wonderful artwork displayed around the school. I thought the winter pictures were excellent.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

My very best wishes to you all for your future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector