

# Halsford Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125937
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	328424
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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)	409
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>	John Faulks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Corbett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<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>	Manor Road East Grinstead RH19 1LR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 324643
<b>Fax number</b>	01324 300680

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

### Description of the school

Halsford Park Primary is a large school that became part of a formal federation with Baldwins Hill Primary School in April 2007. The two schools share the same headteacher and governing body, and some senior leaders have responsibilities in both schools. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006 and there have been changes in all the other senior leadership positions in the past three years.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, and the majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has an increasing number of children who speak English as an additional language, and particularly in the Reception classes. The school was inspected in February 2008. Its overall effectiveness was judged inadequate and the school was given a notice to improve. The report stated that significant improvement was required in relation to the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Halsford Park's overall effectiveness is good. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school is improving rapidly which is why pupils enjoy school even more now. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent as a result of good care, guidance and support that reinforce pupils' good personal development and well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and the following comments were typical of many: 'We like the themed weeks – it makes learning more fun,' and, 'Staff are so caring and supportive.'

The key reasons for the school's turnaround are the headteacher's high expectations, clarity of purpose and direction. Together with her supportive senior leadership team, she has set about improving provision and establishing good systems. A strong culture of improvement has developed and this, combined with the good leadership and management at all levels, gives the school a good capacity to improve further. Significant in the school's progress have been improved analysis and subsequent use of accurate data, including frequent checks on pupils' progress, and initiatives to strengthen teaching and learning. Now good teaching, a more imaginative curriculum and a closer focus on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills have contributed to their good achievement, especially in science and mathematics. These are all significant improvements since the previous inspection. Whilst pupils' achievement in English has improved, their writing skills, especially in terms of their use of a wide range of vocabulary, are a relative weakness.

The pupils' attainment on entry has declined in recent years, and it is now below level expected for their age. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this provides a good platform for the good progress made throughout the school. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average and rising. This shows that the strong focus on improving pupils' basic skills and eradicating the legacy of underperformance in Years 5 and 6 has paid off. Good provision and support for those who are vulnerable or who have particular needs ensure that the school really is inclusive. It works closely with outside professionals and parents to support pupils' learning and well-being. Teachers' planning is good and usually meets pupils' differing learning needs, although more able pupils are not consistently challenged in lessons to extend their learning.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to keep safe and of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They are growing into mature young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life. They are very involved in the local community and are proud to be buddies and school councillors.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes because the curriculum is planned effectively to promote 'fun' learning both indoors and outside. Children's welfare needs are met well in the welcoming and caring environment, and good leadership and management ensure very effective partnerships with parents and outside specialists. In turn, this helps to ensure that children's personal development and well-being are outstanding, and they become confident learners. In role as 'training astronauts' they made interesting junk model space

rockets and enjoyed writing postcards to Alien Marvin, building on their creative and literacy skills effectively. They identified planets, researched facts about the solar system and developed their mathematical understanding well. When eating healthy snacks and talking about shape, one child exclaimed, 'The banana is like a crescent moon.' Children especially enjoy role play, whether travelling in space buggies or discovering the whereabouts of minibeasts. Through effective teaching, children learn well and make good progress so that by Year 1, they reach above average standards in most areas of learning. Their communication, literacy and language skills are, however, relatively weak, partly because of the limited opportunities to extend children's use and range of vocabulary in readiness for writing. Children identified with learning difficulties receive effective intervention and support, as do those who speak English as an additional language. Parents sometimes act as interpreters for these children to help them achieve as well as their peers. Gifted and talented children are also encouraged to extend their own interests at home and school.

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

- Help pupils to develop and use a wider range of vocabulary in their written work to enhance its quality further.
- Ensure more able pupils are always challenged in lessons so they achieve consistently well.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's skills and understanding on entry to the school are below the levels expected for their age, but they reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are above national averages in English, mathematics and science. Set against a previous legacy of underperformance, this represents good progress for most groups of pupils. The school's own data indicate that pupils are on track to mostly exceed the challenging targets set at the end of Years 2 and 6, and inspection evidence confirms this. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils identified as gifted and talented benefit from well-targeted support and work, though more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to make as much progress as they could in lessons. Children learning English as an additional language make good progress because of their work with language support specialists and the help of parents as interpreters.

Achievement is strongest in science and mathematics, although weaker in English and especially in writing. The use of a published programme has made significant inroads but there has been insufficient time for this to impact on results and extend pupils' use and range of vocabulary. Nonetheless, standards across the school are rising sharply.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' moral and social development is very strong, ensuring a calm and productive learning environment around the school. They are polite and helpful. As they move up the school they become mature beyond their years, as seen in their self-discipline and sensitivity to respecting others. Children in Reception settle quickly and become independent learners, but are happy to work collaboratively when needed. Pupils understand the role of world religions and the need for respect of different cultures, which is reinforced by their link with a Gambian school. Whilst they are introduced to Eastern European cultural influences and are learning to adapt to the many new ethnicities within their school, their understanding of a wider multicultural Britain today is less well developed. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy the wide range of

extra-curricular activities. They take their responsibilities seriously as school councillors and buddies. Pupils sing to senior citizens, hold a community 'talk lunch' and suggest developments to improve the local environment and support a number of charities. Pupils work safely and know the importance of healthy lifestyles. Basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developing well so they are well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching has improved because planning is better focused, and assessment information is used effectively to identify any likely underperformance. This then triggers support for individuals and groups in English and mathematics. Pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to get to the next level and marking helpfully guides them too. Learning activities are innovative and exciting. This results in very positive learning attitudes and good opportunities for independent learning. Good questioning techniques ensure pupils' speaking and listening are particular strengths, and the use of talking partners helps to reinforce their learning, though these skills are not yet transferred into their writing. More able pupils do not consistently make the progress they could because whilst most teachers plan challenging tasks, these are not always implemented. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together for the benefit of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Coordination of advice and support for these pupils is good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to aid pupils' learning and focuses their attention. Those who speak English as an additional language enjoy using 'translator pens' to aid their learning. These improvements are the result of considerable staff training, support and rigorous monitoring.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Skills-based topics which link different subjects together have significantly improved learning, especially in mathematics and ICT. In role, Year 6 'witches' researched Macbeth and enjoyed weighing ingredients for a poison potion. This sort of hands-on learning reinforces pupils' personal development, and is typical of how the school is constantly seeking ways to develop the curriculum so that it is more interesting, relevant and exciting. Opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences in the Reception classes are successfully extended into Years 1 and 2 to ease children's transition. Whilst opportunities for writing have increased significantly, they are still not sufficiently effective in overcoming the weakness in this area. Pupils say they enjoy 'one world', science, sports and problem-solving weeks, and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, and participation rates are good. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from a range of structured activities within lessons and additional focused small group support from skilled teaching assistants.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school complies with all requirements for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils. Whilst risk assessments cover most potential hazards, the school is rightly reviewing this area to make sure it is even more rigorous. Staff are good role models and give outstanding support to all pupils, so that there are high levels of trust between staff and pupils. The high quality

care is based on the good understanding staff have of the needs of individual pupils. Inclusion is a strong feature, despite huge variations in the number of languages spoken. Strong links exist between parents, the school and outside professionals. The quality of academic guidance and support is good. Pupils know their targets and through marking and feedback, they know what to do next to improve. Transition arrangements are good on entry, which means pupils settle quickly, and when they move on to the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides clear vision and direction, and has ensured accurate self-evaluation. Senior managers form a strong team and successfully lead improvements in a number of key areas. Rigorous analysis of the school's effectiveness has highlighted areas for improvement and appropriate steps have been taken to remedy weaker areas. Middle managers have been nurtured in their role and now undertake all forms of monitoring, to manage and lead their subjects effectively. All staff recognise the need for high quality provision and there is a shared, strong and sustainable culture of rapid improvement. Developing the creative curriculum, designed to promote better basic skills, has enhanced both teachers' approaches and confidence. Robust procedures for checking and tracking pupils' progress have been pivotal in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, have accelerated learning and have largely eradicated the legacy of underperformance. Governors are knowledgeable, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and challenge the school when needed. The school's commitment to promoting community cohesion is good. Through the federation, links within the local community are well established and it has a high focus on engaging parents, local groups and other schools. The 'respect agenda' ensures pupils have a strong respect for others and their different backgrounds, and they learn about global issues through their eco awareness activities.

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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?	2
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	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?	1
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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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>	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halsford Park Primary School, East Grinstead RH19 1LR

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you and your parents and teachers that Halsford Park is a good school. It is improving rapidly.

Here are some of the good things about your school

- You have so much fun learning. You work hard and make good progress. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach above average standards overall. Well done!
- Your behaviour and attitudes are excellent and you all get on so well together.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception classes.
- Teaching is good and teachers find lots of ways to make learning interesting and exciting. We were impressed by the way you know how to achieve your targets.
- You know how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise, and how to keep safe.
- Everyone at school works hard to keep you safe and take good care of you. You told us if you were worried you knew you would be helped.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working really hard to make sure the school gets even better.

We have asked the school to do the following things to make your school even better

- Help you to improve your writing skills and to encourage you to use a wider range of vocabulary in your writing.
- Make sure those of you who find learning easy have more difficult work to do in lessons, so that you always do as well as you can. You can help too by continuing to work hard.

Yours faithfully

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector