

Heelands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110382
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337485
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Vischer
Headteacher	Lesley Barnard
Date of previous school inspection	2 September 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding and other documents. They scrutinised questionnaires from members of staff and looked at 22 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How the school is helping less able pupils to develop reading and writing skills.
- The impact of Early Years provision on the children's progress in personal development.
- How well teachers use assessment information to show pupils the next steps in learning.
- The way the curriculum helps pupils to enjoy school and to achieve.
- The impact of new subject leaders on whole-school development.

Information about the school

Pupils come to this small school from Heelands and the surrounding area of Milton Keynes. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The school has a broadly average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have moderate learning difficulties. An above- average proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language and about half are at the early stages of speaking English. The main home languages of these pupils are Punjabi and Urdu. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. There have been several changes in teaching staff in the past year. The school has received many awards, including the Healthy School Award and Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Heelands is a welcoming school that provides a good education. Members of staff, especially the greatly respected headteacher, work exceptionally well with parents to support the pupils' good achievement and personal development. Good teaching and an exciting curriculum help pupils to learn quickly. Children make a good start to their education in Reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils of differing abilities make good progress in all subjects. Leaders are aware that some less able pupils, but not those with special educational needs, make slightly less progress than their peers in learning letter sounds, how to use capital letters and full stops and in understanding why you need to add and subtract numbers. Members of staff are working together well to make sure that work always matches the needs of these pupils, marking points out their next steps to improve more clearly, and they are given more opportunities to practise what they have learnt across the curriculum.

Pupils behave well because they take part in writing their class rules and so understand why the rules have been made. They are keen to help each other and their teachers. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being involved in the various interesting activities that make work seem like play. They respect adults and other pupils and concentrate well most of the time. They are exceptionally good at taking responsibility by being class helpers, singing to the elderly and by helping to sell vegetables they have grown to a local restaurant.

Excellent care supports pupils thoroughly both socially and academically, irrespective of their specific needs. Consequently, pupils feel safe at school and are prepared well for the next stage of their education and later life.

Good procedures for self-evaluation enable leaders to be aware of the next steps needed to make the school even better. Pupils mostly achieve challenging targets because leaders monitor their progress closely. Standards have risen since the last inspection, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further. There are several new subject leaders who have not yet received training to enable them to take a more active part in checking up on how well pupils are learning and providing guidance so that minor weaknesses in teaching are tackled even more swiftly.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the literacy and numeracy skills of less able pupils by,
 - providing a closer match of work in learning letter sounds
 - ensuring pupils consistently use capital letters and full stops appropriately

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- using marking more sharply to show pupils their next steps
- increasing expectations for pupils' writing across the curriculum
- giving pupils greater opportunities to use and apply adding and subtracting to solve mathematical problems. (July 2010)
- Increase the impact of the new subject leaders by,
 - providing training in the role of subject leadership
 - enabling leaders to monitor teaching and learning
 - sharing good practise across the school. (July 2010)

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Good relationships enable them to cooperate with each other and to learn quickly. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed testing their knowledge by giving each other mathematical clues for a shape and space awareness game. Pupils behave well because they enjoy the interesting practical tasks they are given in lessons and the wide range of additional activities the school offers. Pupils are friendly and are very keen to help others in school and in the local and wider community. They take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy being made 'sparkler of the week' for considerate behaviour.

Pupils make good progress from below-average starting points and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Attainment is rising because smaller class sizes, a more relevant curriculum and more focused teaching are all having a positive impact on learning. For example, in a lesson about describing a story, pupils in Year 1 were able to work in small groups according to their ability, using post-it notes for their ideas or puppets to support their explanations. Leaders have identified correctly that less able pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in developing literacy and numeracy skills. This is because teachers do not consistently expect these pupils to practise the skills they have been taught and occasionally give them work that does not match their needs closely enough. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that there are no significant differences between the progress of different groups of girls and boys, including those with English as an additional language, and this was confirmed by inspection observation. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress to other pupils. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and they confirm that they feel safe at school. For example, one pupil in Year 2 said, 'Teachers always look after you'. Pupils deserved their Healthy School Award and Activemark. They know how to stay healthy by eating fruit and vegetables and they particularly enjoy exercising by using the trim trail in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are fully involved in setting class rules, and praise each other for 'being kind' and 'really sensible'. Pupils' attendance is below average. This is not because they do not want to come to school, but because a very small number of parents do not make sure that their children attend regularly. The school is working with these parents with success to

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reduce any unnecessary absence.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants motivate pupils by providing them with interesting activities. Good behaviour management helps pupils to understand firm but fair boundaries and enables them to get on with their work sensibly. Teachers ask pupils probing questions, giving them good opportunities for speaking, listening and thinking carefully. Occasionally, work is not planned to challenge all pupils to practise and use their literacy and numeracy skills fully, and this affects less able pupils in particular.

Teachers use target setting, praise and marking to help pupils know what they have done well, although they do not always show them precisely what they need to learn next in order to help them move on in their learning.

The new curriculum for Years 1 and 2 follows on well from provision made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and includes relevant links between subjects. There is a good range of interesting additional activities such as visits and clubs. Pupils enjoy working in the school grounds and forest school, benefitting from the good social and academic

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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support these activities offer. There are some missed opportunities for pupils, particularly the less able, to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Excellent systems for caring for all pupils ensure that they feel safe and can make good progress. There are thorough transition arrangements for new pupils and academic guidance is used rigorously to identify and put in place support for any pupils who are not learning quickly enough. Teaching about sensitive issues such as dealing with bereavement and sex education is particularly supportive. For example, pupils in Year 2 discussed why their class 'boy' hamster would not have babies and understood why they would be sad when their pets die.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and this message is shared and understood well by other members of staff and governors. Pupils are set and mostly achieve challenging targets. Teaching and learning are monitored closely, although this is mostly undertaken by the headteacher as some leaders are very new. The senior management team monitors the progress of individuals and groups of pupils through their thorough tracking system. Governors provide good support and challenge, assisting the school in improving swiftly.

The school promotes equality exceptionally well and ensures that no pupils suffer discrimination. At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding procedures were found to be good. The school works effectively with external agencies and exceptionally well with parents to support pupils as necessary and to ensure that they all have the same good opportunities. The school runs several workshops to help parents engage in their children's learning. For example, recent workshops, including one on reading and another on nurturing, were appreciated by small groups of parents.

The school's good approach towards promoting community cohesion is ensuring that pupils learn about life in multicultural Britain and beyond. The school has good plans to link up with a school in a contrasting location to expand the pupils' horizons further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Year groups vary, but in most years less than half the children are working within the levels expected for their age when they join the school in the Reception Year. They make good progress, especially in speaking and listening, personal, physical and creative development. Standards are broadly as expected in most areas of learning when children enter Year 1, although they are below them in literacy and numeracy. Leaders work well as a team and have correctly identified that last year children did less well in writing, learning about letter sounds and carrying out mathematical calculations than in other areas of learning. The curriculum has been adjusted to provide children with greater support in learning and developing these skills. In addition, assessment arrangements have been enhanced so that weaknesses can be picked up more quickly. In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at working alongside children on activities they have chosen for themselves. For example, during the inspection one assistant worked successfully with two children as they sorted bears according to colour and size. Good questioning and well-targeted support enabled the children to gain knowledge and confidence. Most children work together sensibly and happily, although occasionally a few children are not working productively when they are away from an adult. Mostly they are engrossed in their learning and during the inspection they particularly enjoyed using a computer programme to dress the teddies and making porridge pictures. Children develop good independence and social skills because all members of staff promote and praise 'doing the right thing' well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are delighted about all aspects of the school. They are especially pleased with the welcome they receive and the way their children are kept safe and enjoy school. They typically make comments such as, 'I have always felt listened to and welcomed' and 'All the staff are great and my child loves going to school every day'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heelands School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	64	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	69	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	50	11	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	50	9	41	2	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	50	10	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	46	10	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	46	11	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	32	14	64	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	32	12	55	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	41	10	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	50	9	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	59	8	36	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Heelands School, Milton Keynes MK13 7QL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so helpful during our visit. We very much enjoyed meeting you and we are pleased that you enjoy coming to this good school.

These are the things that are best about your school

- You make a good start in the Reception Year.
- You learn quickly because teachers give you fun things to do in lessons.
- Your teachers are kind and caring.
- You are exceptionally good at doing things to help others. Your school council chose some good equipment for the playground.
- It is good that you enjoy keeping fit on the trim trail and playing with your friends.
- We could see that your teachers and teaching assistants make sure that you feel safe.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make your school even better.

These are the things your school should do next

- Help those of you who find reading, writing and sums more difficult to have more chances to practise what you have learnt, show you how you can do better next time and make sure you are always given the right work to do.
- Help the new subject leaders to learn how to check up on how well everybody is doing, so that they can help make your school even better.

Thank you again for talking with us about your school and showing us your work. You could help your teachers by making sure you always do the right thing.

Yours faithfully

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector

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