

Heather Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119926
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339557
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Jamieson
Headteacher	Lou Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed five teachers and they visited 10 lessons. An inspector conducted one joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed the breakfast and after school clubs. They held discussions with staff, parents, governors and two groups of pupils. They looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 29 parents and carers, 57 pupils and nine members of staff.

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

- the impact of recent initiatives to accelerate progress and raise attainment
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan for the range of abilities and needs in each class
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and whether the school's evaluation of its capacity to improve as good is accurate.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school with more boys than girls on roll. Virtually all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has achieved National Healthy School status, the Activemark, Eco-Schools and International Schools awards. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Heather Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education for its pupils. In this welcoming school, pupils feel safe and valued because staff know the pupils well and provide good levels of care. Relationships throughout the school are good. The large majority of pupils are polite, have positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to contribute to the school community. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance and the enthusiasm with which they take on responsibilities. All of these features contribute to the positive school atmosphere. The school's partnership with parents and carers is good. Nearly all who replied to the inspection questionnaire or who met with the inspectors expressed great satisfaction with the school and their children's experience. One parent expressed the views held by many, 'My daughter is happy to go to school and is full of enthusiasm to learn - this is all down to the staff and the headteacher. Heather School has such a lovely welcoming and open atmosphere'.

With good support from staff and governors, the headteacher gives clear direction to the school. Staff have responded well to senior leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching and learning are mostly good and occasionally outstanding. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the improvements are too recent to have had a sustained impact on achievement by the end of Key Stage 2. This is the main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than better and attainment at the end of the key stage is average. Also, in a few lessons, progress slows because pupils' interest is not engaged as they spend too long listening to the teacher and higher ability pupils are not extended enough.

While pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics shows improvement, weaknesses in writing skills, particularly those of boys, remain. This is, in part, because feedback to pupils through the marking of their work is sometimes too focused on effort and does not give enough guidance on how to improve the quality. Standards pupils reach in science are below those in English and mathematics, largely because of weaknesses in scientific enquiry. While there are clear strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, their understanding and appreciation of different cultures within the United Kingdom is less well developed.

The good procedures for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements and underpin the school's caring approach. The school has good partnerships with the local community, external agencies and schools both locally and abroad. All issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Rigorous monitoring procedures provide an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result the right priorities for improvement are identified. Challenging targets are set and assessment information

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is used well to check pupils' progress and provide targeted support where needed. This, together with effective support from skilled teaching assistants, underpins the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, and by those in challenging circumstances. The effective leadership and governance of the school, the improvements in teaching and learning, together with the strong commitment to continuous improvement by all staff indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and science by:
 - ensuring that in the marking of pupils' writing they are given consistent guidance on the level of the work and what they must do in order to improve
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Make teaching and learning consistently good or better by ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in all lessons and an appropriate level of challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the curriculum by broadening the range of opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils respond well to the best teaching by working hard and being keen to do well. In these lessons, they develop new skills quickly and consolidate their understanding by persevering with tasks set. They greatly enjoy discussing their ideas or answers to questions with their 'talk partners' and collaborate well when working in small groups. They work with interest and take care to produce their best work, as seen when pupils in the Year 3/4 class challenged each other's ideas on the ecological benefits of solar energy. This picture is not entirely consistent in all lessons and consequently overall progress, while improving, is satisfactory rather than good. At times, the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils' efforts slacken. Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology are good, and the quality of the art work around the school is impressive.

Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during journeys to and from school. They understand that exercise and a balanced diet are vital to their healthy development. The school council provides a useful forum for pupils' voices and pupils contribute well to the school and wider community in other ways, for example acting as playground leaders, monitors or raising money for worthwhile causes. The average standards in basic skills and their good collaborative

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abilities provide a satisfactory base for their future economic well-being. The school's participation in gaining the International Schools award has led to a good link with a school in India. This is helping to develop pupils' understanding of life in other countries.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Common features of all lessons are the very good relationships between adults and pupils, effective support from well-trained teaching assistants and pupils' consistently good behaviour. The best lessons have a brisk pace and skilful questioning ensures that learning is secure. Good progress is made because planning ensures that pupils are actively engaged in challenging learning tasks. A particularly good example of this was in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson when pupils made rapid progress in their understanding of area because they were fully engaged in stimulating group work. When teaching is less effective, the pace slows because introductions are too long and, in some instances, higher ability pupils are not stretched enough. More effective use is being made of assessment information to track pupils' progress towards their targets. However, while the marking of pupils' work is regular, in many instances it does not give

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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pupils clear enough guidance on what they need to do to achieve a higher National Curriculum level.

Staff are in the process of developing a more creative curriculum. It is planned to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes and to emphasise the links between subjects. The Year 3/4 topic on World War II provides a good example of this. Residential and other visits broaden pupils' experiences, and the Activemark award reflects pupils' engagement in physical activity. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom. Staff provide good guidance and support, and parents and carers are complimentary of the support and integration of pupils with particular needs. The breakfast and after school clubs provide worthwhile additional facilities to the school's provision, giving pupils a secure start and end to the day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff, parents and carers, and governors agree that the school's improvement owes much to the clarity of vision of the headteacher. Since taking up her post, systems for evaluating school effectiveness have been strengthened and more effective use is made of performance information. As a result there is a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas to be developed. The school improvement plan is centred appropriately on the importance of raising standards and inspection evidence indicates that these are beginning to rise. Subject coordinators take their responsibilities very seriously. They recognise where there are gaps in their expertise and are keen to draw on best practice to develop their roles. Staff and governors provide good standards of care and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare, safety and security. All take their responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding very seriously, and are vigilant in ensuring the safety and well-being of its pupils. The school works well with outside agencies to support individual pupils when required, showing a commitment to promoting equal opportunities for all pupils and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community and a developing awareness of life in other countries. However, opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of Britain as a diverse, multicultural

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society are less strong. Building on the existing good relationships with parents and carers, a number of imaginative steps are being taken to involve them more actively in their children's learning.

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
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children enter Reception, their skills are generally consistent with those expected for their age. They make good progress, confirmed by assessment records, because teachers have a good understanding of how young children develop and learn. Adults carefully observe and record children's achievements and use this information to plan their next steps in learning. Parents and carers make valuable contributions to their children's learning. Arrangements to promote children's health and safety are secure, and all welfare requirements are met, which ensures that children feel safe and are happy in school. The range of learning opportunities provides positive experiences for children, both indoors and outdoors, and covers the six areas of learning well. Staff have identified the outdoor environment as an area where there remains scope for further development to extend children's learning experiences. Staff work well together and good leadership promotes good outcomes.

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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

The parents and carers who spoke to the inspection team and those who returned the questionnaires were very positive about the school and express no significant concerns. A very small number of parents and carers indicated some concerns about the extent to which the school meets their children's needs. Inspectors agree that in some lessons there is scope to increase the level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils. They said their children enjoy coming and they are confident that their children are kept safe. They particularly appreciate the care and approachability of the staff, and the quality of leadership and management. The inspection team agrees with the parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heather Primary 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	76	6	21	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	45	13	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	45	14	48	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	45	15	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	45	14	48	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)	12	41	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	38	14	48	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	41	15	52	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	41	16	55	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	59	12	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	62	11	38	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heather Primary School, Leicestershire, LE67 2QP

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke with many of you, and have told your teachers that you were really helpful.

You receive a satisfactory and improving education. Children in Reception are given a good start to their school lives and make good progress. You make satisfactory progress in other years and reach average standards at the end of Year 6. We believe that you could reach even higher standards, particularly in writing and science. Therefore, we have asked your teachers to make sure that you are actively engaged and really stretched in all of your lessons so that you make the best progress you possibly can. We have also asked that you are given more opportunities to learn about people from a variety of different backgrounds. Most of you enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. You understand the importance of being healthy. Most of you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. You learn to work and play well together and to help each other. Your teachers also spend a lot of time marking your work. We have asked that when they do this they give you clear guidance on what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. You can help yourselves to make more progress by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

Adults at school look after you well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and governors are determined to make things even better. We think that everyone at Heather can work together to do these things and that you will want to play your part by working hard.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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