

Heather Garth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106608
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	355981
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Farr
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Wise
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 12 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work and the childcare provision. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 61 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff

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

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise the attainment of boys.
- How well the school has sustained improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- The effectiveness of the school's systems to promote regular and punctual attendance and reduce absence.
- The extent of pupils' awareness of diversity in Britain.
- The impact of leaders' partnership work particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Heather Garth is smaller than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is larger than average. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. A larger than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has the Healthy Schools and Global Dimensions awards. 'Happy Kids', run by the school's governing body, offers breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs for its own pupils and those at neighbouring primary schools. The school is open from 7.30am to 6pm, 50 weeks a year. The school offers childcare for 0 to three-year-olds.

A children's centre opened on the school site in September 2006. This provides crèche facilities and supports extended service provision. It was not part of this inspection.

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

Heather Garth is a good school. Pupils are quick to confirm how much they enjoy their learning. Strong partnerships with other schools, outside agencies and local families ensure that parents and carers commend the school as 'a credit to the community'. Staff engage well with parents and carers and direct families to extended services in and beyond the school. As a result, due to the success of family and adult learning programmes, parents and carers make increasingly effective contributions to school life and their children's learning while simultaneously improving their own life chances. Effective links between all members of the Early Years Foundation Stage staff cement positive relationships with parents and carers from the very start of a child's school life. Senior leaders evaluate accurately the school's performance. There is recognition that, within an overall picture of rising attainment and good learning, including that of boys, the key task is to continue to focus intently across all year groups on removing important barriers to pupils' learning. For instance, there is a continuing focus on strengthening still further pupils' English skills, though pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to extend their speaking and listening skills in lessons. Pupils' attainment in English is also being hampered by inconsistencies in the teaching, some instances of low expectations and missed opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other curriculum subjects.

The school demonstrates a good track record for improvement, having consolidated many longstanding strengths and has also improved on some previously satisfactory elements of its work. Senior leaders remain highly ambitious for the school. All these characteristics highlight the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Nonetheless, the supportive governing body has limited impact and does not hold leaders and managers fully to account because its own procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work lack the required rigour.

At the heart of the school lies a very caring ethos which reassures pupils and makes them want to be here. As a result, pupils behave well and develop strong personal skills. Still more remains to be done to raise the attendance levels of a small minority of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, particularly speaking and listening, by:
 - eliminating remaining inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in relation to expectation and the following of agreed assessment procedures
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication

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technology (ICT) to write in all curriculum subjects

- extending opportunities for pupils to make verbal contributions in lessons.
- Raise levels of attendance by:
 - encouraging even more parents and carers to send their children to school regularly
 - promoting the benefits of regular attendance in increasingly innovative ways to pupils, parents and carers.
- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that it monitors and evaluates more rigorously the work of the school
 - regularly assessing the impact of its own work.

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

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. They exhibit strong moral and social awareness and back this up with comments such as, 'I've changed my attitude and it's boring to be bad.' Pupils make particularly effective use of time in practically oriented lessons. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked very well together in the school hall; from survey data they had already collected about a party, they constructed a 'human bar chart' to demonstrate the results and help with the analysis. From looking at the numbers of pupils moving into different lines, pupils were able to calculate how many more pupils wanted, for example, food and drink at a party as opposed to dressing-up clothes. Boys and girls engage equally well in such tasks. Their enthusiastic responses are helping to narrow the attainment gap between different groups of pupils, and particularly for boys.

By the time they leave Year 6 pupils attain broadly average and improving standards in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils' speaking and listening remain key elements to develop further and the school is continually seeking new ways of engaging boys yet more readily in their learning. Overall, pupils learn well and make good progress from well below expected starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers as they benefit from successful mentoring and support programmes, following the clear identification of their individual needs. Pupils demonstrate a very secure knowledge of how to eat healthily and stay fit; most come into school early to eat toast before lessons begin and this has helped to improve punctuality. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to turn to with problems. The large majority of pupils generally attend regularly and arrive on time. However, there is a small minority whose attendance remains below average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' 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	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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers create a good learning environment in classrooms that are well resourced and spacious. Teachers, mentors and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that correct strategies are drawn up and followed in order to meet the individual needs of each pupil. Effective questioning in lessons extends pupils' knowledge and confirms their understanding of the main learning points. However, inconsistencies creep into some lessons, which then detract from pupils' learning. For instance, there is sometimes too little challenge within activities or too much time spent listening to the teacher talking. Teachers make regular and accurate assessments of what pupils know and understand. They use this valuable information to plan how best to move pupils' learning on rapidly. Nonetheless, they do not always follow the school's marking policy in terms of the guidance they provide for pupils in their books.

The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection. It challenges pupils to explore new ideas together and to avoid stereotypical viewpoints. The international primary curriculum (IPC) and the 'Global Dimension' initiative both help to broaden pupils' understanding of the world outside their own locality. A range of extra-curricular enrichment activities support well the development of pupils' personal skills. Increasing overlaps between curriculum areas help pupils to make links in their learning, although pupils do not have enough opportunity to use ICT when they write.

The school is valued locally and leaders strive to enhance adult, family and extended services wherever possible. Very effective care, guidance and support for pupils and their families are well targeted. Popular breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs meet pupils' and families' needs very well as they combine healthy options with stimulating

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activities. Comprehensive induction and transition processes ensure that pupils move through the different phases of their education. All adults expect positive attitudes and approaches to learning from pupils in all areas of school life. Much effort is given to support the attendance of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable or of those who are frequently absent. More remains to be done to complement the current work of administrative and mentoring staff through the introduction of different approaches to encourage the parents and carers of more regular attendees to send their children to school every day.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear vision of how to build further on the strong improvements already made. She challenges the staff to follow this vision and they are generally successful in reaching the targets set in all areas of school life. Supportive teamwork is a key characteristic of why morale is high throughout the school. Senior leaders and the governing body work well together in the best interests of all stakeholders. The governing body shows keen commitment and generous support to families, pupils and staff but does not challenge the performance of the school or its own impact as much as it could. Leaders promote sustainability well and pupils increasingly make healthier lifestyle choices such as eating a cooked school lunch. The school provides good value for money.

The school promotes safeguarding well and the designated governor is very effective. Policies and procedures reflect careful practice that can be seen in action throughout the school. Adults promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well so that all groups of pupils reach their potential. Appropriate analysis of contextual factors ensures that pupils and staff focus on developing the school's and community's awareness of local, national and global issues as seen, for instance, through the 'global dimensions' work of the school, with links in Africa and Romania and the impact of such initiatives is improving pupils' awareness of diversity in Britain.

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	3
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Increasingly, they join as babies or toddlers in the Happy Kids registered childcare provision. Here, practitioners provide safe, welcoming and well-resourced environments where children clearly feel secure, both inside and outdoors. Practitioners provide strong support for children's welfare, learning and development. Adults follow the prescribed systems and spend much of their time in close support of children's individual requirements. As a result, there is a calm and happy atmosphere for children and families to enjoy. The childcare provision complies with the requirements for registration. Strong leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that staff across the whole setting collaborate effectively and work with similar expectations. Well-planned transition arrangements mean that children find it easy to adapt to the Foundation 1 and 2 classes because they often visit the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. Similarly, Happy Kids staff spend time each day working alongside children in these classes.

Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. An increasing proportion of children now reach the expected standards for their age, primarily due to close tracking and detailed planning by staff that better meets their individual needs. Parents and carers are appreciative of 'the happy, safe and fun environment'. The outdoor environment is packed with interest, such as camouflaged decked areas and a 'bear cave'. These support children's increasingly imaginative and investigative learning. Key persons take good care of children. All the adults have a clear knowledge of the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make careful observations of what children know, understand and can do from their first day in the baby room through to the end of Foundation 2. The well-documented 'learning journey' records for each child show, through detailed written observations, photographic evidence and assessments, how much progress each individual makes throughout that child's time in the setting.

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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

Almost one quarter of all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. An overwhelming majority was highly supportive of the school. They typically comment, 'I like what I see,' and 'very satisfied'. These comments reflect the very positive feedback from the school's own surveys. A few responses raise individual concerns and these have no underlying pattern. Overall, parents' and carers' views are similar to those of inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heather Garth 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	59	25	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	59	25	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	56	23	38	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	59	21	34	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	56	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	48	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	57	19	31	2	3	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)	25	41	27	44	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	52	25	41	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	34	32	52	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	43	28	46	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	46	27	44	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	64	19	31	1	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heather Garth Primary School, Rotherham, S63 8ES

Thank you for helping my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We enjoyed watching you at work and play and hearing your views on school. You told us that you really enjoy your lessons, you feel very well cared for and that you really look forward to coming to school. We agree with these comments and with the positive feedback provided in the questionnaires some of you completed.

We judge that Heather Garth is a good school. You behave well and know right from wrong. You support each other effectively, work well together and are kind to one another. You say that you particularly like lessons with practical elements as these help to make lessons more enjoyable. These factors are helping all of you to make good progress and achieve well. The popular breakfast and after-school clubs clearly add to your enjoyment.

One reason for our visit was to see how your school could improve. We have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to help you to reach higher standards in English, particularly by improving your speaking and listening skills, which will also help you to read and write better. You can help with this by always listening very carefully in lessons and then making the most of every opportunity to read, speak and write. We also want to make sure that each of you with less than 100% attendance tries even harder to come to school every day so that overall attendance improves. You can remind your parents how much learning you miss when you are absent for even one school day. We have also asked the governing body to check even more closely just how well the school is doing.

On behalf of the whole inspection team, I wish you every future success.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Hughes

Lead Inspector

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