

Heronsgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100158
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307309
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	536
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Love
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Prockter
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Whinchat Road London SE28 0DW
Telephone number	020 8317 0809
Fax number	020 8854 1630

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Heronsgate is a large primary school with a culturally diverse population. The majority of pupils are from White British or Black African backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is more than double that found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than found nationally. Their needs are related mainly to speech and language difficulties. There are 135 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with 100 children attending the Nursery on a part-time basis. The school has Basic Skills, Healthy School and Investors in People awards and the Inclusion Charter mark, ICT mark and Activemark. There is a pre-school group and an after-school club on the school premises, which are managed by private providers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Heronsgate is an outstanding school, of which staff, governors, pupils and their parents are justifiably very proud. There have been rapid improvements since the last inspection because of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who is given very effective support from an excellent leadership team. Improvements have lifted the school from its fragile position in previous years. A legacy of substantial underachievement has been transformed into a situation in which pupils are now making excellent progress. This occurs because teaching and learning and the curriculum are outstanding. One parent wrote, 'A great head and his team of staff have made Heronsgate go from strength to strength. The children seem happier and contented.'

From very low starting points pupils achieve exceptionally well, to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Very effective help is given to pupils who are identified as needing extra support, which is often given by skilled teaching assistants. This ensures that all pupils have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds, abilities or particular learning needs. As a result, pupils with specific learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language progress just as well as their classmates. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Attendance has been below average for several years, but is now above average as a result of the exceptionally effective strategies the school has to improve it. There are still families who take their children out of school during term times, which means that their children miss important learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They develop as very well-rounded individuals who are happy and confident. The values embedded in the life of the school encourage pupils to develop their self-esteem and aspirations as citizens of the future. Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. Their enjoyment of school is infectious and is evident in all they do. The emphasis the school gives to tailoring its teaching, curriculum and care to meet the differing learning and personal needs of every single child is exemplary and a major factor in its success. The inclusive ethos and excellent care, guidance and support all make a very positive contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are exuberant, articulate, enthusiastic and well mannered. One parent wrote, 'I have seen terrific improvement in behaviour and the school environment and am impressed by the anti-bullying campaign and the school values.' There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council is very active and pupils said that adults listen to them. Pupils relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously. They feel very safe and secure and say that they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. Pupils understand exceptionally well the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. With strong, positive attitudes to learning and a highly developed sense of values, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher is innovative and forward thinking, and his outstanding leadership and management is at the heart of the school's success. His energy and expertise inspire loyalty and commitment from the whole staff. His firm belief that everyone in the school community matters is a strong motivation for staff, pupils and parents. One parent wrote, 'I cannot have wished for a school that supports its pupils and their families as much as all the staff do at Heronsgate.' The school's self-evaluation is highly effective in identifying what could be even better and clearly demonstrates its relentless

drive for continued excellence and outstanding capacity for further improvement from its existing successful position.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the EYFS. They make outstanding progress from starting points that are very low compared with the expectations for their ages. By the end of the Reception Year the vast majority reach or exceed the goals expected for their age. This is because of a very well-planned curriculum and outstanding teaching, which help them to achieve exceptionally well. There is the right balance between adult-led activities and those that children undertake independently. Ongoing observation to check learning works very effectively to help children learn and develop, meeting each individual child's needs. Frequent opportunities to talk and listen and the support of a bilingual assistant helps the many who are learning English, and those who have speech and language difficulties, to make excellent progress. The provision is exciting and nurturing with an emphasis on building confidence and developing personal, social and emotional skills in good preparation for future learning. Behaviour is excellent and relationships are calm, trusting and friendly. Teaching is skilled and enables children to participate fully in the exciting range of opportunities provided for them, from the pirate ship and the café; to the outside garage. They feel safe and healthy and able to enjoy their day. Children and their parents benefit from a carefully planned induction process that helps children settle very well once they start school. They quickly learn to work together and develop independence in their learning. The excellent leadership and management of the EYFS ensures that all the welfare and learning and development requirements are met. All staff work extremely well together to create an environment where children can thrive. A parent wrote, 'They involve them so much, doing different activities and building their confidence. I am very proud of their hard work.'

What the school should do to improve further

The school has no major issues to address and has outlined its priorities for development in its improvement plan. These include a continuing focus on raising standards, particularly in KS1 and in writing across the school. The inspectors agree that in order to build on its success, the school should implement these priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From their very low starting points, pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Improvements in teaching, the curriculum and pupils' attitudes towards learning have all contributed to eradicating previous underachievement and helping pupils catch up with their work. The rate of progress has accelerated over the past three years. The provisional Year 6 results in 2008 were an improvement on the previous year with the biggest increase seen in mathematics, which had been the focus of the school. Pupils' work in Year 6 shows that pupils' attainment is average overall. The 2008 Year 2 results remained below average, but observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and information from the school's robust assessment system show that current standards in Years 1 and 2 are much closer to average and the pupils are making good and frequently better progress. The focus for the school is currently on writing, as standards are not as good as they are in reading. Pupils are responding very well to an increased range of exciting and purposeful opportunities to improve

the quality of their writing. An impressive range of artwork displayed around the school is of a very high quality, as is pupils' singing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely proud of their school and said they really appreciate all the different activities provided. As a result, attendance has improved and is above average, which demonstrates that pupils enjoy coming to school more than they have done in the past. Pupils are very polite, friendly and mature and behaviour is excellent in lessons and in the playground. They feel safe and free from bullying as a result of the work of the school council in creating an anti-bullying charter, which is signed by all the pupils and is very effective. They are confident to turn to adults with any concerns should they arise. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They are considerate and accepting of differences in others' social, religious and cultural backgrounds. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the local and wider communities through their involvement in local initiatives such as litter collection, competitions and their involvement with a local Nursing Home.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers are enthusiastic and focused on promoting learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons very much, behave very well and are inspired to learn. Teachers expect a great deal from the pupils. They are dedicated towards helping pupils, as one teacher said, 'to go up and up and up'. This determination to challenge pupils to think for themselves and always produce their best work results in exceptional progress. Lessons are very well planned. Pupils understand clearly what they will be learning, and effectively revise what they have learnt. Tasks are interesting and varied, and teachers use carefully selected books, films, poetry and computer images to inspire pupils to write well. This focus on using only the best models raises pupils' aspirations and attainment, and results in rapid progress. Teachers help pupils to improve by consistently marking their work well, offering clear and constructive advice. Teachers work in effective partnership with teaching assistants to provide work that is tailored well to pupils' individual needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of all learners exceptionally well. There are excellent links with the local community. These make a significant contribution to providing a curriculum that is innovative and exciting, and that widens the pupils' horizons as well as developing a range of new skills such as sailing and rock climbing. The school has worked very successfully to link together different subjects to make learning more meaningful and relevant for pupils. Teachers and pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) very well to support many areas of the curriculum and enhance learning. Events such as the themed weeks, visits and visitors to school very successfully add to the richness of the curriculum. There is a superb range of popular, well-attended clubs that broaden pupils' personal experiences. One parent wrote, 'I am absolutely amazed at how many teachers give up their time for after school clubs which all the children love doing.' Music, art and drama add excitement and richness

to pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils, working with a visiting artist, have created a huge mural promoting a range of local facilities including sailing and climbing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care and support for each pupil is based firmly on the values which the school promotes and which are well understood by the pupils. As a result, pupils learn to value and respect others. They are considerate towards one another, and the number of playground incidents is very low. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school works in excellent partnership with parents and with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils' needs. The school uses innovative and exceptionally effective measures to promote pupils' attendance. The school provides excellent academic guidance, and this enables pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work, because they have clear targets displayed in their books and on wall charts, and are highly motivated to move up to the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The work of the headteacher and senior leaders has brought about impressive improvements in pupils' achievements and their personal skills. All leaders share a commitment to meeting the personal and academic needs and aspirations of every single child and make an exceptional contribution to school improvement. Community cohesion is excellent, because the school works very effectively with its parents and partners in the local community and promotes knowledge, understanding and tolerance of its culturally diverse population. The school also ensures an understanding of the global community, for example through participation in events such as One-World week, refugee week and international football days. Leaders at all levels are supportive of each other, which means that less experienced colleagues benefit from others' skills and expertise. There is a strong emphasis on professional development and staff commented that, as a result, they feel valued and inspired. The governing body provides good strategic leadership, supports the school very well and holds it to account effectively for its performance. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust and enable staff to have a very clear view of the school's strengths and the initiatives they wish to develop. Parents are positive about the school. One wrote, 'My child has made significant progress. I believe it is due to the commitment from both teachers and support staff, hard work and excellent communication.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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**

18 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heronsgate Primary School, London, SE28 0DW

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

- You are doing extremely well in your learning because teachers make your lessons exciting, you want to learn and you make outstanding progress. You have done really well in mathematics. We read lots of your interesting writing in lessons and around the school and the quality of your writing is improving fast.
- You told us that you really enjoy being at school and love all the different things you do. Many more of you are now coming to school every day, which means you do not miss out on important learning. Well done for this.
- Your teachers know you very well and help you learn in the way that is just right for all of you. This means you learn new things very quickly.
- You are very well behaved and it was great to see you get on so well together and help each other at work and play.
- Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best.
- Your headteacher and all the staff do an excellent job in running the school and know how to make it even better in the future.

Because you are doing so well and making such good progress, we agree with your headteacher that you should reach higher standards in all of your work, particularly in writing and by the end of Year 2. You are right to be proud of all that you achieve. Some of you who have been at the school for a long time told us how much you think things have changed for the better over the past few years. This is because you and all the staff have worked hard to make your school an exciting place to be. We were lucky enough to hear your wonderful singing while we were there and we were very impressed with all the wonderful artwork we saw. I thought your T'riffic Thamesmead mural was fantastic and I am sure it will look great outside the school.

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

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector