

Handsworth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103059
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	323739
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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)	459
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	Miss Sara Wrightman
Headteacher	Mrs Lillian Mumme
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Handsworth Avenue Highams Park London E4 9PJ
Telephone number	020 8527 5991
Fax number	020 8531 0522

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors:

- evaluated the impact of the school's strategies to improve writing
- looked at what is being done to improve the quality of teaching overall
- investigated the impact of middle leaders and the support they receive.

Evidence was gathered from performance data and other documentation; discussions with senior staff, pupils and governors; sampling of lessons and of pupils' work; observations of children and adults around the school; and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and has few pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is above average, although the number who are at the early stages of learning English is average. These numbers have increased this year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and has increased since the last inspection. These difficulties are mainly specific learning needs. The proportion with statements of special educational need is below average. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools and the Active Schools awards. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the Nursery and Reception classes. The YMCA provides childcare on the school site. This is inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Handsworth Primary is a good school where pupils achieve well and get a good start to their education. They usually enter Year 1 with above average standards, make good progress throughout the school and leave with standards which are consistently well above average. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading, mathematics and science. The school has identified that some pupils of all abilities across the school, especially boys, are not achieving as well as they might in writing, and has set about tackling this energetically. More opportunities for pupils to write at length have been introduced, and there has been an increased focus on writing skills. Boys have been encouraged to write for different purposes which interest them, and this has given them greater motivation. It is too soon to see the impact of these initiatives on pupils' achievement and standards, but they are already having a positive effect on their enjoyment and confidence.

Pupils learn well in the school because they are well taught. The school has had difficulties in recruiting staff over the last year, but nonetheless has managed to maintain a good quality of teaching. It has achieved this through careful monitoring of lessons and support to try to promote consistent practice. Typically, pupils benefit from energetic teaching and lessons with a good pace, where there is a clear focus on lesson objectives and pupils' individual targets. In these lessons, pupils get plenty of opportunities to learn independently and express their ideas, and their enthusiasm for learning is obvious. In some lessons, however, teachers spend too much time talking to the class, and the pupils become passive in their attitudes to learning, waiting for what comes next.

There are some examples of very good academic guidance throughout the school, when teachers put pupils' targets in child-friendly language, and marking clearly indicates what pupils should do next to improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent in every class. The school makes good use of its tracking systems to identify those pupils who are not making the progress expected and give them extra support. Pupils with additional learning needs, and those who are at the early stages of learning English, achieve well because their needs are understood and they are well supported. The school's curriculum has a good focus on literacy and numeracy skills, but balances this with coverage of the full range of other subjects, including modern foreign languages. There are some good extra-curricular activities available to pupils, particularly in sport. Some parents felt that more educational trips could be offered to support the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they enjoy good pastoral care and good opportunities to develop as individuals. 'The environment of the school feels safe', said one pupil, and others commented that bullying was not a problem at their school. Behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding, and pupils are polite to adults and helpful to one another. Relationships are very good at all levels. One pupil commented, 'We're all friends here', and others agreed. Pupils are keen to do their bit for the school community, for example through the school council or as playground leaders. They have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles, which is evident from the awards the school has gained. Their well- above average academic standards and good social skills mean they are well prepared for moving on to secondary school. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' levels of attendance significantly since the last inspection, and these are now above the national average.

The school is successful in its work because it is well led and managed. The headteacher and assistant headteacher give the school outstanding direction. School self-evaluation is honest and incisive. Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and are not complacent about the school's performance. They make effective use of the school's systems for monitoring and tracking its work and take rigorous action to bring about improvement. The senior staff are well supported by middle leaders. The school has recently introduced a good new system of using teams for leading literacy and numeracy. This has the advantage of enabling staff to develop their skills and ensuring that stress is reduced by the sharing of tasks. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative on pupils' achievement and standards, but it is already proving successful in increasing staff knowledge and experience.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There are strong links with the adjacent secondary school and with specialist services for pupils who need extra support. Most parents are very supportive of the school and value what it offers their children. Many feel that their children are very happy at the school and that they are thriving in its positive and caring environment. However, a number of parents feel that the school could do more to communicate effectively with them and listen to their views. The school has undertaken to address these concerns. The governors fulfil their role well and understand how to hold the school to account. They are very supportive of the hard work done by staff, particularly as the school's circumstances have altered during the period since the last inspection. The school has adapted well to a changing intake and difficulties with recruitment, and its improvement since the last inspection has been good. It has a determination to continue to do its best for its pupils. Consequently, its capacity for future improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle swiftly into the Nursery and Reception classes because staff make every effort to get to know them and meet all their different needs. The attention given to children's well-being is outstanding, and as a result their personal development is outstanding. They rapidly grow in confidence and are happy and outgoing learners, forming secure relationships with adults and with one another. Teaching is good in the Nursery and the Reception classes, and this means that the children make good progress from their starting points. Most come to the school with a level of skills which is broadly average for their age, though recently an increasing number have additional needs, and this year there has been a greater proportion than usual who are new to learning English. By the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children's skills are generally above expectations for their age.

In both the Nursery and the Reception classes, children enjoy a good range of stimulating and imaginative activities which are well planned to cover all their areas of learning. The Nursery classes have a good purpose-built outdoor area which children can access freely, but the Reception classes have to manage with a temporary fenced-off area, which has to be set up daily within the main school playground. The school has plans to create a more permanent area for the Reception classes to promote their outdoor learning more fully. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The leader understands clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has established sensible priorities for development. The new requirement to assign each child to a key person is a current area of focus, as staff are being trained to carry out this role effectively. At present, staff assessment of children concentrates too much on

what they can do, rather than how well they can do it and what they need to do next to make further progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing across the school, particularly for boys.
- Develop the role of the key person in Nursery and Reception, by improving staff skills in identifying achievement and the next steps in learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Handsworth Primary School, London, E4 9PJ

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We found that Handsworth Primary is a good school, and we know that you are happy to be there. You are doing well in lessons because your teachers know you well and give you work that is right for you.

We were very impressed with your outstanding behaviour in class, and we saw that you all get on together very well. The staff take good care of you, and those of you who need extra help are well supported.

The headteacher and her staff run the school well and want to make it even better in future. We have asked the school to do more to make sure that all of you achieve as well as you can in writing. You can help by following your teachers' instructions for your writing tasks carefully and by letting them know if there is anything you don't understand about what you have to do. We hope that the boys will go on enjoying their written work. We have also asked the school to make some changes to staff duties in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Well done to you all, and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Chesterfield

Lead Inspector