



Hyde Heath Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110237
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278387
Inspection dates 7 October 2005 to 7 October 2005
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Weedon Hill
School category	Community		Hyde Heath
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5RW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494783835
Number on roll	35	Fax number	01494783835
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Underwood
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Julie Mouldsdales

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 7 October 2005 - 7 October 2005	Inspection number 278387
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small infant school situated in the village of Hyde Heath, which is an area of socio-economic advantage. The vast majority of pupils are of white British origin and live near to the school. A very small number of pupils are from other backgrounds, including mixed heritage and European backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is low compared with most schools. The attainment of the children on admission to the reception year is above average. The school accommodates a privately run pre-school group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school's own evaluation. The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are rising and are high in reading and well above average in mathematics and science. Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and benefit from the many opportunities it provides. The quality of education throughout the school is satisfactory, including the provision made for children in the reception year. Standards are above those expected for reception children in all areas of learning except in writing where the children are not forming letters correctly or accurately enough. Although writing standards are improving, they are not as high as in reading and mathematics. Assessment is not being used effectively enough to provide challenging writing targets for all pupils. The pupils are well behaved in lessons and at other times. A good feature of the school is the way it fosters the pupils' personal development. Relationships are very good across the school and with parents and the local community. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has managed substantial staff changes effectively. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection having improved the way the pupils respond in lessons and the effective deployment of support staff. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the teaching of handwriting, spelling and punctuation, to raise writing standards further.* Use assessment more effectively to plan work that better matches the learning needs of all pupils and sets challenging targets in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school that achievement is satisfactory. Many pupils enter the school with above average attainment. By the end of Year 2, standards are high in reading, well above average in mathematics and science but average in writing. National test results confirm these standards when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The headteacher has monitored pupils' written work closely and put in place strategies to improve spelling and punctuation. This is beginning to have an impact as the most recent test results in 2005 show an improvement in writing standards. However, the pupils' performance in writing lags behind that seen in reading and mathematics. Handwriting is not consistently formed and some pupils mix upper and lower case letters in words. More able pupils are sometimes misspelling common or high frequency words and some pupils are not always punctuating sentences correctly. The reception children make satisfactory progress. The large majority exceed the standards expected for their age in reading and mathematics but the children are not forming letters well enough to reach the standards expected in writing. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. The small numbers of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils. All

pupils make good progress with reading because the staff follow up reading targets effectively. Home reading diaries also enable parents to help their children's reading at home. The schools sets appropriate targets for reading which is closely monitored by the staff but writing targets are not always challenging enough. Achievement in other subjects is satisfactory with increasing use made of information and communication technology (ICT). Computers are providing more opportunities for the pupils to write stories, poems and factual accounts and this is helping their writing development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good and is firmly based in the school's good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's positive ethos underpins every aspect of its work and ensures that the pupils enjoy learning. The pupils try hard because they want to succeed. Their opinions are listened to and acted upon as when they suggested improvements to the school sports day. Parents agree that the school fosters a sense of community. The pupils respond with good behaviour and attendance. An understanding of cultural diversity is fostered through the celebration of festivals and music from around the world. The school encourages the pupils to eat healthy food and are made aware of the importance of diet and exercise with special awards given for pupils and families that walk to school. The governors and staff often arrange community events that develop in the pupils a sense of citizenship and responsibility towards others. For example, the pupils joined with the local community and campaigned to reduce the speed limit on the roads through the village.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspection judgements agree with the school's view that teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching of children in the reception class is satisfactory. The children soon settle to their tasks which are practical and enjoyable. This was evident in a lesson where the children enjoyed investigating different smells in mystery containers. The teacher used the activity to encourage the children to explain to others what they found. This improved their confidence in speaking. Reading is very well taught because teachers and support staff effectively use structured reading schemes to track how well the pupils are doing. The pupils enjoy reading, including non-fiction, as one boy commented, 'I like finding things out about animals and where they live'. Assessments of reading progress are accurate so the pupils understand their reading targets. Parents are encouraged to support their children's reading development at home and extra reading time is given to individuals in school. Assessments of pupils' writing are made but are not always accurate enough to ensure that tasks are pitched at the right level for every pupil. For example, more able pupils who form their letters well are not always

provided with enough time to edit, correct or improve their writing. Writing targets are not precise enough to inform the pupils how best to improve their spelling, punctuation or handwriting. This leads to uneven achievement. The staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Time is set aside for these pupils to work in small groups so they receive tasks that are appropriate to their needs and help them to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with some good features. There are good links between creative subjects, literacy and numeracy. The pupils talked enthusiastically about making story books with pop-up pictures. Although there are opportunities for pupils to write at length in many subjects, the quality and accuracy of their writing is not being checked enough. This sometimes slows the pupils' progress. Educational visits and the use of visitors are strong features of the curriculum. There are good links with the neighbouring church where the school celebrated its harvest festival. A recent visit to the National Gallery broadened the pupils' understanding and follow up work in school enabled the pupils to explore different types of art. The pupils develop their self-confidence and sense of community when participating in local events and festivals. Their sense of enterprise and well-being was enhanced when participating in a local project involving the re-cycling of plastic. There are good links with pre-school providers, other schools and the on-site pre-school group. These foster a greater understanding of the local and wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support that the school gives to all pupils are good. The staff provide good levels of support for pupils with learning difficulties. There is a very good partnership between the school and parents who are made fully aware of what is happening in school and how they can support their children at home. Health and safety routines are in place and both the staff and governors ensure that risk assessments and child protection procedures are known to all staff and embedded in practice. The pupils say they are happy and safe in school and they care for each other at break-times. The 'buddy bench' is an initiative that the pupils and staff agreed was needed to support any vulnerable pupils who need reassurance at break-times. The well-being and safety of pupils is incorporated well into topics such as a recent design and technology topic when the pupils made sunglasses to protect them from the sun.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory despite the school judging them to be good. Close monitoring of the pupils' performance and the quality of teaching have begun to raise writing standards. However, there is more to do to sustain this

improvement because assessments have not been sharp enough to track pupils' progress in writing. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in developing a team approach which is successful in enabling the staff to take the school forward. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that all the pupils are included in what the school has to offer. Governors provide good support and hold the school to account. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on an analysis of the pupils' performance in national tests. The headteacher and governors are coping well with the difficulties of managing a small school with unpredictable numbers on roll each year. Resources are of very good quality and the beautifully landscaped outdoor areas are well used and create positive conditions for learning. There is good capacity to address the priorities identified in the school's improvement plan having addressed the issues left from the last inspection. The school is highly consultative and takes every opportunity to involve and inform parents. The school is increasingly playing a central part in the life of the village and its community. This helps the pupils to play a full part in the everyday work of the school and its community. This is having a positive impact on the pupils, their personal development, welfare and achievements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I enjoyed talking to many of you and was very pleased to see how much you and your parents like school. It was good to see so many of you get special awards and stickers in assembly for working hard and doing well in lessons.

You are well behaved and polite and I enjoyed talking to you and your teachers at lunchtime. You are very nice to each other and have thought of some lovely ideas like the 'buddy-bench'.

You are doing very well with your reading and mathematics work. I liked the pop-up books you made and the stories you wrote. You enjoy writing but I think you could do better. I was pleased to see many of you writing long stories. Your teachers are working hard at helping you to write neater and to spell words better. I would like you to carry on doing this so that your writing is as good as your reading and mathematics work.