

Camps Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117226
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312536
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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 on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Platten
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Cliff
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0LT
Telephone number	01438 233 800
Fax number	01438 233 801

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. The much lower than average take up of free school meals does not reflect the families' entitlement. Many, but not all, children enter school with standards lower than those usually seen for children of this age, particularly in the areas of speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few are at the early stages of learning English. A very small number of pupils are looked after by others than their immediate family. A higher than average percentage of pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary schooling.

The following are the awards given to the school in recognition of its work: Gold Arts Mark status, ICT Mark, Investors in People, Healthy Schools Award, Eco School Award - Silver, Extended School Award and International School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Lively and enthusiastic learners achieve well and make good progress academically and in their personal development. Parents' comments such as: 'the consistent, calm approach of staff, combined with warmth, fun and care mean that my son now loves going to school and is thriving academically and emotionally', confirm this. Good improvements since the last inspection, together with strong leadership and direction from the headteacher and the commitment of staff and governors indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly over the last two years and is now good. This is helping to ensure that pupils achieve well and can be seen particularly in Years 1 and 2 where pupils are working at levels significantly above those in previous years. By Year 6, pupils usually reach average standards which shows good progress from a lower than average baseline. The current focus on writing is helping to raise standards in English. Learning develops systematically over time because the work is usually well-matched to pupils' abilities. However, there are weaknesses in how staff track pupils' progress long-term and how they use the information gained from this. Consequently, sometimes insufficient challenge is provided for more capable pupils, or those who are falling behind are not identified quickly enough.

Pupils' personal development is good and results in good behaviour and a sensitive attitude to others. The successful personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils learn to get on with others and know how to keep safe and healthy. The good curriculum maintains pupils' interests well. It encourages them to look beyond their immediate community and provides a good focus on raising their global awareness. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community and beyond. Care, guidance and support are good and result in pupils feeling safe and happy, and clear about what they should do next to improve their work and learning.

Leadership, management and governance are good and ensure the school provides good value for money. The headteacher gives good direction to school improvement and involves all in the decision making process. Senior managers recognise the need to review the way staff use tracking information at a whole school level. They know that currently it is too complicated and time-consuming to gain evidence about an individual, class or year group. The good self-evaluation procedures have helped the school community to reflect on how well they are doing and judgements generally match the inspection's findings.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory admission arrangements and good progress in children's personal, social and emotional development ensure children settle quickly and become happy and confident learners in the Nursery. Progress in other areas is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Reception class. Their progress is monitored carefully and activities are provided which promote their learning and encourage independence. Effective use is made of the indoor areas to ensure the children are offered a curriculum that is well matched to their needs, but this is not the case with the outdoor areas. Opportunities are restricted by the limited space and the lack of shelter. This impedes children's development, particularly in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. By the end of the Reception class, the majority

of the children are working within the expected levels in their mathematical development, communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Their achievement in these aspects is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning is good and, the teachers and support staff work together well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify the collection and use of data so that staff can more easily track pupils' progress and quickly identify the need for additional support or challenge.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage by developing the quality of provision in the Nursery, particularly in relation to provision for outdoor learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress across the school and achieve well. In the 2007 Year 2 national assessments, pupils reached below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics but due to better teaching and significant improvements to the curriculum, the current Year 2 are working at average standards in reading and mathematics and above average standards in writing. The 2007 Year 6 national test results show average standards in English, mathematics and science. The current Year 6 has a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and although progressing well, not all are working at average levels. Although staff are focussing on ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can, occasionally some of the more capable pupils do not achieve the higher levels. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, those speaking English as an additional language and those who find learning difficult, generally make good progress and some reach higher standards than seen nationally for these groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their cultural development is particularly strong. They talk enthusiastically about communicating with pupils in different parts of the world and finding out about their ways of life. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking regular physical exercise. They have a good understanding of personal safety. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities seriously. They show respect and care towards each other and make an excellent contribution to the school community and beyond. They enjoy being members of the school council, or a 'playground buddy'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take pride in supporting the youngest children during lunchtimes and in acting as playground friends. Behaviour in and around the school is good but now and again this good behaviour slips among a small minority. Pupils are keen to raise funds to support local and national charities such as UNICEF. Their attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is improving. However, too many pupils continue to take holidays in term time. The good social skills, achievement in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and effective transition arrangements ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils now make good progress because teachers are skilful at creating the right conditions in which pupils flourish and develop confidence. Classrooms are lively places where pupils are actively engaged as partners in their learning. They are clear about what they are doing and why. Classes have a wide range of ability but lessons generally build effectively on all pupils' learning because they are planned well. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. Through skilled classroom and behaviour management, pupils' enthusiasm is kept focused without repressing their exuberance. Meaningful praise is a strong feature. This, coupled with very good relationships, teachers' zest and energy and emphasis on broad underlying skills, helps raise pupils' aspirations so that they have a 'can-do' approach to the work. Pupils' independence is fostered and group work encouraged. Marking is diligent and at its best, along with the setting of clear targets, encourages this strong partnership with pupils by indicating how they might improve. Whilst classroom assessment is effective overall, practice is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it provides wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to achieve success. Creativity and imagination are fostered extremely well through the school's work in the arts. This, along with a strong emphasis on developing an international awareness, ensures that the provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent. The school's work in personal, social and health education fosters other aspects of pupils' personal development well. Respect for others is a strong theme and is underpinned by the close links with a local special school. ICT is used well both as a teaching and learning tool. Trips and visits extend and enrich the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs. The breakfast and after-school provision extends opportunities further. There is now a good emphasis on developing basic skills but the recent improvements have yet to work throughout the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Some aspects of care, guidance and support are excellent. Staff show a very strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils, including those who present an initial challenge due to previous unhappy educational experiences. Staff support vulnerable pupils extremely well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous. There are excellent links with other schools and agencies to support pupils and extend learning opportunities for pupils and the local community. Pupils with learning difficulties usually make good progress because of the strong provision and regular review. Parents value the support the staff give their children. Staff track pupils' progress through periodic assessment at a strategic level but the use of this information at both whole school and classroom level is not sharp enough. Pupils know their targets and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows good leadership in setting out a vision for the school and giving clear direction. Staff work well as a team and share her aspirations. Senior and middle managers work enthusiastically to raise standards but the full impact of this newly formed team is yet to be seen. Systems to check how well pupils are progressing and what they achieve are not effective enough. Several systems are used and there is not enough consistency and coherence across the school. Good systems to check the progress of the school and to identify what it could do better, and the excellent work with other agencies, have been instrumental in the good improvement since the last inspection. However, sometimes the criteria by which the school judges its success are not specific enough. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness, for example, by asking questions about standards.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Camps Hill Community Primary School, Stevenage, SG2 0LT

You may remember that three inspectors recently visited your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for speaking to us about your learning and what you do here. We think you go to a good school and we have listed below some of the things we particularly like.

- You work hard and make good progress. Your writing has improved a lot.
- You enjoy school and behave well because you are interested in lessons.
- You get on well with each other and look after each other well.
- You support the school and local community well and raise funds to help good causes.
- All staff work well as a team and teaching is good.
- You feel safe in school. We were pleased to hear that you know what to do if there is any unacceptable behaviour like bullying, and also that you talk to a friend or member of staff if you have problems.

Mrs Cliff leads the school successfully and staff and governors support her well. They have agreed to focus on two things to make the school even better. They will improve the way they use the information they have on how well you are doing and what you achieve, to make sure you receive the best possible support and challenge. They will also improve provision for the youngest children in the school, focusing especially on providing even better opportunities for children to learn outdoors. We know you will respond well to their efforts and try as hard as you can.

We left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector