

# Squirrels Heath Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102304
<b>Local Authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	355170
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Pickles

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs T Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Drew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Salisbury Road Romford RM2 5TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 446476
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 457090
<b>Email address</b>	admin@shi.havering.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included seeing 10 teachers teach 18 lessons or part-lessons. Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including improvement plans, records of the school's monitoring of provision, pupils' work, assessment information and procedures and policies to protect and safeguard pupils. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Questionnaires from 71 parents and carers and 19 staff were analysed to help inform the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the quality of teaching and use of assessment ensure that boys make as much progress as they can, particularly in writing.
- How effectively leaders and managers use the outcomes of monitoring to evaluate the school's performance and drive improvements in teaching and learning.
- The impact of the creative curriculum on pupils' achievement, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is adapted to reflect children's different needs and starting points, particularly in their personal and social development and language skills.

## Information about the school

Squirrels Heath is a larger than average infant school. Most pupils are from a White British background and a small minority of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic groups. A very small minority of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language, and a small minority are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly for moderate learning difficulties, is above that found nationally. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Childcare provision is provided on the school site but this is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection report. The school has gained awards which recognise pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and sustainable living.

**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

Squirrels Heath is a good school where pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. They work and play together harmoniously, which together with their good behaviour, makes a significant contribution to their good achievement. Pupils feel safe because of the good care, guidance and support and well-established safeguarding procedures. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the school's work and the strong links between home and school. As one parent stated, 'We feel as if our views as parents are valued.' Most of those who responded to the questionnaires, distributed as part of the inspection, are happy with their children's experience at the school. The engaging and well-planned curriculum closely reflects pupils' interests and makes clear links across subjects, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As one parent said, 'My children really enjoy the topics and get into them.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well because the environment and curriculum are well adapted to promote their social and emotional development alongside their acquisition of basic skills. Pupils continue to make good progress across the school and leave at the end of Year 2 with attainment that is above average overall and high in reading. Most recent assessment data indicate that the school has been particularly successful in accelerating boys' achievement in writing, particularly at the higher levels, which was a whole-school priority. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well because the overall quality of teaching is good. Some teachers, however, do not make enough use of assessment information to plan activities which match pupils' different levels of ability closely enough or check how well pupils understand their learning during lessons. In some lessons, there is too much teacher-talk and this limits pupils' opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. Systems for monitoring children's progress are rigorous and make a significant contribution to their sustained good progress. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly. However, the extent to which pupils are given information about how to improve is variable.

The purposeful and effective leadership of the headteacher has ensured the school has continued to improve achievement since the last inspection. Senior leaders and governors make good use of monitoring activities to plan for improvement. However, the use of measureable success criteria to evaluate the impact of their actions is currently underdeveloped. Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders have a well-informed view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Middle leaders regularly monitor provision for their areas of responsibility, including the quality of teaching and learning, and this contributes to the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching to 90% by July 2012 by:
  - using assessment information to plan activities which more closely reflect pupils' different starting points
  - checking pupils' understanding of their learning more rigorously during lessons and ensure written feedback provides guidance about next steps, where appropriate
  - reducing the proportion of teacher-talk and providing more opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels monitor the impact of planned actions for improvement more rigorously against measurable success criteria, including the quality of teaching.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and most show positive attitudes towards their learning. Class activities help promote pupils' basic skills well and pupils respond very positively to the topics, which make clear links across different subjects. Pupils co-operate well and respond enthusiastically when given opportunities to work together creatively and share their ideas. An example of this was in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils discussed the advantages and disadvantages of being a pirate and showed high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in the activity, which promoted their reasoning and questioning skills well. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils responded enthusiastically to activities which challenged them and provided a real-life context for them to apply their mathematical skills using money and calculating change from given amounts. In a few lessons, however, pupils sometimes lose focus because they are sitting on the carpet for extended periods of time and opportunities for them to be actively involved are limited. However, pupils generally achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with many reaching above average performance in national tests. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress in their learning because of the well-targeted support they receive. Pupils' current work indicates this trend of good progress is continuing and attainment is above average, and high for some groups.

Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that adults will listen to them and sort out any concerns they have. They are proud of the contribution they make through the school council and Eco-council and feel their views are listened to. Good examples of these are the installation of drinking fountains, which were requested by the school council, and writing to parents and carers for donations of unwanted toys for pupils to play with at lunchtime. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how exercise and a healthy diet contribute to their physical and emotional well-being and they eagerly participate in a range of sporting activities. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and they respect and value each other's beliefs and know the difference between right and wrong. Their above-average attainment, well-developed basic skills and average attendance prepares them well for the next stage of their education and future economic well-being.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers know their pupils well and plan activities which engage and interest them. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and classrooms provide stimulating learning environments with displays that celebrate pupils' work. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan activities which are well matched to pupils' different ability levels and they all are actively involved in their learning. For example, Year 2 pupils were working collaboratively to identify positive and negative features of instructions linked to their 'Lighthouse Keeper' topic and given good opportunities to share their ideas. In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slowed by too much teacher- talk, which limits pupils' opportunities to contribute, and planned activities do not provide sufficient challenge for all groups of learners. Sometimes opportunities to check pupils' understanding during the lesson are missed. Additional adults are deployed effectively in the classroom and deliver well-planned extra support which makes a significant contribution to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is particularly good at broadening pupils' understanding across subjects through the topics which interest and engage them, including good opportunities for music, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design. However, planned activities in lessons do not always reflect pupils' starting points closely enough

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and this limits the progress some pupils are able to make. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including football, dance and French as well as trips to central London, provide exciting enrichment activities for pupils which contribute to their good achievement.

The school is quick to respond to concerns about individuals or groups and is ensuring that all groups achieve equally well. Staff take good care of pupils and the school has strong links with external agencies to ensure that the welfare needs of all pupils are met. Strong support is provided for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Transition arrangements are well established on entry and across year groups, and links with the junior school are strong. Links with parents and carers when children start school are good and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly strong. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance have been successful in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent and in improving overall attendance, although this remains average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders communicate high expectations which are shared and understood by staff and have been successful in maintaining the school's good performance since the last inspection. Staff are motivated and there is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. Leaders and managers closely monitor all aspects of provision. However, they recognise that more needs to be done to ensure a maximum challenge for all pupils in all lessons. Assessment data is used rigorously to monitor the progress of all pupils and set challenging targets, and this has contributed to a rising trend in attainment. The school's inclusive ethos is securely focused on promoting equality of opportunity amongst all groups of pupils and tackling discrimination. This is shown clearly by the school's success in narrowing the gap in attainment between girls and boys. Discrimination of any kind is not knowingly tolerated or condoned.

Governors provide good challenge and are influential in determining the direction of the school, holding it to account for its performance and ensuring that statutory duties for safeguarding are in place. Procedures for safeguarding are good and staff are well trained to meet the health and safety needs of pupils, including the most vulnerable. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and the school provides good opportunities, including workshops, home research and classroom visits, to enable parents and carers to participate in their children's education. The school promotes community cohesion well, including links with schools in Newcastle and Malawi, and this contributes to the harmonious relationships that exist both within school and the wider community.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children start school with skills and capabilities expected for their age, although levels of social and emotional and language development are lower. Children make good progress in their learning because of the systematic teaching of letters and sounds and the well-planned activities which stimulate and engage them. Adults' good understanding of children's emotional development makes a significant contribution to their good social development. Children behave well and develop good levels of independence because they are allowed to make their own choices and their learning is well supported and encouraged by adults. The outdoor learning environment provides varied and exciting activities which promote all areas of development, although the quality of the indoor provision is more variable.

Children's safety and welfare are promoted well through good levels of supervision and the school has good relationships with parents and carers, so transition arrangements are smooth and children settle quickly. The Early Years Foundation Stage leaders provide clear direction and use the outcomes of monitoring activities to plan for improvement. Recent improvements to the outdoor area and changes to the way letters and sounds are taught have had a positive impact on outcomes for children. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, however, are not as well-developed as other monitoring activities.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The response rate to the questionnaire was lower than average; however, inspectors spoke to parents and carers on the playground to further support the evidence base. Those parents and carers who commented favourably about the school were in the very large majority and many positive comments were made about the staff who 'go the extra step to help'. Most agree that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A few noted concerns about the extent to which the school meets their children's particular needs and how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the school has effective systems in place for meeting pupils' learning and emotional needs and managing pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Squirrels Heath Infant 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 258 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	70	19	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	66	23	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	39	38	54	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	49	32	45	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	52	33	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	37	37	52	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	42	39	55	0	0	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)	23	32	43	61	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	39	33	46	8	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	35	38	54	4	6	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	32	40	56	4	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	41	36	51	2	3	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	58	27	38	3	4	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Squirrels Heath Infant School, Romford RM2 5TP**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school. You told us that that you enjoy school and that the teachers and other adults take good care of you. We think yours is a good school and here are some of the things we found out.

- Children make a good start in the Reception class.
- You do well in your learning and your work in reading, writing and mathematics is higher than the levels expected for your age.
- You behave well in lessons and are kind to each other.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves fit and healthy.
- You feel safe in school and are well looked after by the adults around you. The headteacher, staff and governors are happy that it's a good school but want it to be even better.

These are some of the things we have asked the school to do to help it become even better.

- Make sure that your work in lessons is not too easy for you.
- Give you opportunities to show the teachers how well you are learning and what you have understood.
- Give you more time to take part in lessons and make sure that you are not sitting and listening for too long.
- Show you how you can improve your work. Make sure that the headteacher, staff and governors check things really carefully so your school gets even better.

We wish you all the best for the future and we hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Pickles

Lead inspector

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