

Hyde Heath Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110237
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378065
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	Barbara Atcheson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Rayne
Headteacher	Alison Whittall
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 January 2009
School address	Weedon Hill Hyde Heath Amersham HP6 5RW
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Barbara Atcheson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nine lessons or parts of lessons were seen and four teachers were observed. The inspector also talked to parents and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. She took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equality, minutes of governing body meetings and planning documents. She scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 44 questionnaires returned from parents and carers as well as those returned by staff.

Information about the school

Hyde Heath Infant School is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few Gypsy Roma pupils attend the school but, overall, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. There is one pupil known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average at school action, one pupil has a statement of special educational needs and there are no pupils supported by school action plus. There are a few pupils who join and leave the school at different times. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into one Reception class. There is a privately run pre-school on site which is not managed by the governing body, and was not a part of this inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2012.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It provides exciting, challenging opportunities for all of its pupils and has no real weaknesses. Traditionally opportunities for art, design, music and drama have been planned as part of topic work based around English, mathematics and science, whilst topics that have stemmed from the creative arts have been fewer in number.
- Children enter the Reception class at the expected levels for their age. They make outstanding progress to reach Year 1 above the expected levels. Achievement is excellent because the warm, welcoming atmosphere helps them to settle quickly and take an active part in the exciting opportunities on offer.
- All groups of pupils, including those who begin school later than normal, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points and have reached levels that have been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last five years.
- Teaching is outstanding because expectations are consistently high. Staff share their own excellent subject knowledge and understanding to plan imaginative tasks which capture the pupils' interests and are based on accurate assessments of pupils' learning.
- The school is a cohesive community. The positive ethos which permeates the school results in exceptional levels of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils are highly involved in their own learning and have the confidence to take risks and work independently.
- High quality professional development has increased the leadership and management skills of all staff since the previous inspection. As a result, despite a change of headteacher, the school has maintained its highly successful drive for continuous improvement through its rigorous monitoring and evaluation of

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staff and pupil performance. The governors make an outstanding contribution to the work of the school at all levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2013, improve the quality of the curriculum by planning an increased number of topics which have their starting points in the creative arts.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

An overwhelming majority of parents agree that pupils make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils achieve exceptionally well. Although a few pupils join and leave the school at different times, most children enter Reception at the expected levels. Short activities, accurately tailored to children's individual needs, build on secure prior learning and equip them with the basic skills in language and mathematics that enable them to access other areas of learning. They learn to sound out letters and words and rise to the challenge to write 'tricky' words independently. They are confident to 'have a go' and busily set about finding out which objects are heavier and which are lighter. One boy was delighted to discover that the heaviest dinosaur was also the biggest. Teachers are highly skilled at harnessing the children's interest. For example, a child's curiosity about a magnetic board developed into a full-scale investigation into the properties of magnets. As a consequence, children make rapid and sustained progress to enter Year 1 with levels above those that are expected. Year 1 pupils' reading is at an above-average level. They read with confidence and use different ways to work out unfamiliar words.

Consistently high expectations throughout the school ensure that this high level of achievement continues. A well-tuned induction programme ensures that pupils who enter the school later than normal waste no time in closing any learning gaps. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar or even more rapid progress because of the consistent approach of all staff and outside agencies. Gypsy Roma pupils do better than others nationally because they feel included and confident and the work is pitched at exactly the right level.

Pupils say they are learning as much as they can; they say lessons are challenging but teachers make learning fun. They delight in sharing their findings. For example, Year 2 pupils were investigating quarters and thirds. One boy could not contain himself and was desperate to explain that not only could he find one quarter, but now he could find three quarters and he went on use secure number facts to explain why three quarters of eight is six. Year 2 pupils read at levels which are significantly above average. For example, one group showed immediate interest in an information book about peanuts. They were surprised that they grew underground and one girl questioned how the cases became hard. She was delighted to read that the harvested peanuts were dried in the sun. 'That's how they get hard!' she reasoned.

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Quality of teaching

All parents in the above average return of parents' questionnaires agreed that their children are well taught. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching is outstanding from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 2. Teachers, skilfully backed by well-trained learning support assistants, plan challenging tasks that pupils find fascinating. Teachers use their own, often expert, subject knowledge to ask questions which probe pupils' understanding. They are adept at listening to pupils' responses and adapting the learning in the light of this. Pupils know that their teachers have high expectations. One Year 2 girl said, 'Teachers always expect us to do our best. If you get a big challenge, it can be very hard but the teachers still expect us to do our very best.' Three Year 1 boys provided a good example of the impact of outstanding teaching. They were very eager to showcase what they had achieved at their different levels in a lesson on how to write a story in order. One had written a three-page extended story and proudly explained the improvements that he had made. Two other pupils relished demonstrating their use of sound buttons to record their work and read the lengthy piece of work they had produced as a result.

Highly trained learning support assistants work hard to give disabled pupils and those with special educational needs the support and encouragement they need to succeed. They are also extremely skilled in helping small groups of pupils, giving well-targeted advice on a one-to-one basis when pupils find their work difficult.

The extremely positive impact of a carefully planned programme of daily reading activities, including linking letters to sounds, is evident in the pupils' high degree of confidence and their love of reading. Pupils' fluency and comprehension is promoted and extended exceptionally well through a range of stories, poetry and information books and a well-structured guided reading scheme.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through extremely well-planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their thoughts. Teachers create an open and safe learning environment which gives pupils confidence to express their views, practise moral decision-making and develop an openness to ideas and have respect for one another. For example, a topic around the Gypsy Roma way of life made Gypsy Roma pupils experts in their field and gave them the confidence to share their culture and traditions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that there is a good standard of behaviour in the school. Pupils not only agree with this but rate behaviour as twenty out of ten! Inspection evidence found that pupils' high levels of engagement, very enthusiastic attitudes to learning and genuine respect and consideration for one another stem from the extremely high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the school and the creative way in which teachers plan their learning. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. They are

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consistently punctual and lose no time in settling down to their work.

Because safeguarding is paramount and behaviour is outstanding, the school is an extremely safe, orderly environment and this is confirmed by school records. All parents and carers say that their children feel safe in school, and pupils agree. Pupils know about the different types of bullying and what to do if it ever did happen but they are adamant that there is no bullying, and school is a friendly, harmonious community. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties make such a marked improvement as a result of a consistent approach that it evokes praise from their peers, which in turn encourages even better behaviour. Such is the maturity of these young pupils that they can rise to the height of excitement in a Jubilee assembly but calm themselves down in an instant, to the admiration of all who observed them. When asked if anything untoward ever happened, after a long pause for thought, one pupil eventually said, 'Sometimes the chickens come in the toilets.'

Leadership and management

The new headteacher has quickly got to grips with what needs to be done. She has brought fresh ideas which have motivated staff and members of the governing body, all of whom share her passion to improve even further. The school has maintained significantly high levels of attainment for the last five years. The governing body share an accurate understanding of the school's performance because they are highly involved in running clubs, sharing their expertise and playing a major role in the strategic work of the school. They also make sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern. The school is highly inclusive and places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work. There is no discrimination. Both recommendations from the last inspection report have been met and exceeded. Most importantly, high quality professional development has extended the management structure and enabled staff at all levels to develop the necessary skills to effectively monitor and evaluate provision. As a result, teaching has improved and all pupils continue to make outstanding progress from their starting points. All of this confirms the school's strong capacity to sustain improvement.

The highly creative curriculum inspires and motivates pupils. There is a tight framework for progression over which teachers plan exciting activities which stem from the pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy making observational drawings from the flowers in the grounds, and their lessons with the specialist music teacher. However, the school recognises the need to plan for a heightened focus on art and music to give pupils more opportunities to improve their skills in these subjects and to use them more often to express their thoughts and feelings.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hyde Heath Infant School, Amersham HP6 5RW

Thank you for being so friendly when I came to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You were very helpful and polite. Your school gives you an outstanding standard of education and, because there are a lot of things your school does very well, you all make outstanding progress. Your headteacher and other staff are always working hard to try to make the school even better. I have asked the school to plan more opportunities for you to use more of the creative arts in your work because I know that you enjoy expressing yourselves this way.

You told me that you enjoy school enormously and that you feel very safe. I was impressed with your excellent behaviour and enjoyed seeing some of your exciting lessons, especially your Jubilee celebration activities. I was pleased to see that you understand how important it is to come to school regularly. I could see that you get on with each other remarkably well and help the school to run smoothly.

I hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest to do your very best all the time so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson
Lead inspector

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