

Garden Suburb Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101282
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	276486
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2005
Reporting inspector	Nicholas (Nick) Butt

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helena Mullins Ms Sarah Sands
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Childs Way Hampstead Garden Suburb London NW11 6XU
Telephone number	02084558198
Fax number	02083814053

Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This three-form entry infant school draws pupils from a wide area. The immediate location is advantaged. It does not have a nursery. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils having free school meals is below average. Fewer pupils have learning difficulties than is normally found, but more have statements of educational need. Two thirds of pupils have a first language other than English. Of these 59 are at early stages of acquisition, the main language being Hebrew. Three quarters of pupils come from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. It has Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools awards. From 1999-2002 it was a Beacon School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Create more opportunities for extended writing in other subjects other than English, particularly for the more able pupils* Involve pupils more in their own learning, through marking that shows them how to improve and by setting individual targets

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching is good, with some outstanding examples. Across the school, teachers create colourful and inviting classrooms, offering pupils a range of interesting and often practical activities. Good use is made of outdoor classrooms to extend learning. Pupils work collaboratively in pairs and groups. In the best lessons, pupils are stimulated to use their imaginations and become thoroughly engrossed in their learning. For example, this happened in a music lesson when pupils listened to Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The teacher's expertise and versatility enabled pupils to respond in many different ways, including playing instruments themselves. Teachers plan activities that revolve around a common theme, such as a favourite story. In this way, links are made between subjects. Teachers know their pupils well and work is generally well matched to ability. Pupils with learning difficulties and for whom English is a new language are taught well. In some classes the brightest pupils are not challenged as much as they could be, particularly in writing. This is partly because marking does not consistently tell pupils how they can improve, an area identified by the school for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The school offers a varied and interesting curriculum that is of good quality. Some of its innovative work is outstanding, for example in the use of popular books as starting points for planning. Pupils' creative and practical skills are developed very well. At any given time in each class, groups of pupils will be engaged in a wide variety of activities spanning many different subjects. Personal, social and health education is given a strong emphasis. The use of writing in other subjects is not as extended as it could be, especially for the more able pupils. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, and for those whose first language is not English, meets their needs well. There is a good range of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' experiences. The Foundation Stage curriculum is vibrant and very well planned to meet the needs of young children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The school creates a happy and secure environment in which pupils thrive and are well cared for and supported. Very good relationships exist between staff, pupils and parents, so that 'there is a huge sense of community' as one parent put it. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties value the high level of expertise and support they receive. The carefully structured gentle arrangements for children starting school are particularly effective. A parent described it as 'a vibrant, nurturing environment'. The school is in the final stages of reviewing its health and safety routines. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place. New systems for assessing pupils' progress are evolving well and are currently becoming established across the school. The school recognises that more direct guidance needs to be given to pupils to help them to improve, especially through marking.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. We really enjoyed our time with you and take away many happy memories. In particular we loved your seasonal performance. You were all having great fun and your singing was beautiful. We know you worked very hard to make it so good. These are some of the other things we like about your school:

* We think your behaviour is superb* You do well in your work* Everybody is kind to one another and helpful* All the adults care for you very well* Your teachers make lessons interesting and fun* We like the way your work is based around a story book * Your artwork and music is of a very high standard.We think your teachers are very clever because they have lots of different things going on all at the same time in your classes. It made our heads spin to see all the exciting activities you were enjoying! We have asked them to let you do longer pieces of writing in your topic work. We also think you would like to be told more how well you are doing, especially when they mark your books. We want you to know what you must do to get even better, and we are sure you will enjoy talking about this with your teachers.

We certainly enjoyed talking to you. It is clear you are very proud of your school, and it is a happy school, with lots of smiling faces everywhere you go. Thank you once again for making our visit such a special one.