



Spring Meadow Infants and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110760
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278505
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Colin Henderson LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Barns
School category	Community		CB6 4RB
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01353 664742
Number on roll	332	Fax number	01353 666575
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Ian Stuart
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Sheila Harbour

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	Inspection number 278505
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is an above average sized infant school and nursery that mainly serves a large housing estate, an area of significant social disadvantage. Attainment on entry is below average. Most pupils are of white British descent, although the nature of the intake is changing with an increasing proportion of pupils, currently seven%, who speak English as an additional language. Many have recently started at the school and are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with educational difficulties and disabilities is average. The school has an assessment unit of ten pupils, many of whom are brought in from a wide area. They are taught mainly in the unit, although the school includes them increasingly in its mainstream programme.

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 that is valued highly by parents and pupils. Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and this is built on successfully throughout the school. Pupils behave well and clearly enjoy learning. Their achievement is good as a result of consistently good teaching, their desire to learn and the good quality support they receive. Pupils attain average standards overall by the end of Year 2 with many having started school with weak language and literacy skills. Their attainment in creative subjects is good. Teachers make good use of assessments to track pupils' progress closely and to meet their learning needs. They identify how pupils can improve their work, although this is not consistently effective in each class. The school provides a caring and supportive ethos and works hard to ensure that all pupils are included fully in its work and daily life. The school views itself as good, which reflects a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. A key factor in the school's success is the very strong leadership of the headteacher, working in an effective partnership with an influential deputy and a good staff team. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and provides good value for money. With the good leadership and management supported by recent improvements in the effectiveness of governing body, the school is well placed to continue to do well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work by giving more consistent feedback and time and support for pupils to read and act upon teachers' comments. - Improve the outdoor play facilities for Reception classes to extend opportunities for physical development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress. Many start in the Nursery with lower than expected attainment and make good progress overall, although the attainment of those children who move into the Reception classes is below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. Reception children make good progress overall, although physical development is limited by inadequate outdoor facilities. Progress is at least satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, and recent initiatives have led to significant improvements. Most children attain the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1 except in communication, language and literacy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. They achieve the targets set by the school and attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics compared nationally and with similar schools. The effective use of ability sets in literacy and numeracy has contributed to pupils' achievement. Pupils attain good standards in creative subjects, for example, dance. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from high quality individual support and make good progress towards their learning targets. The school provides well for gifted and talented pupils. The increasing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language

make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in their personal development and the school has worked very hard to provide additional support to promote their basic English language skills. However, the lack of available specialist language support has restricted the achievement of some pupils, especially in literacy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are promoted well in every aspect of the school. Pupils are effectively taught to recognise their worth as individuals. Relationships are outstanding and behaviour is consistently good. Teachers value pupils highly and this contributes strongly to developing high self esteem and positive attitudes to learning. As a result pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly because they want to succeed. Particularly good attention is given, from an early age, to encouraging pupils to become independent. They are given an effective voice in the running of the school through the school council; older pupils take greater responsibility for their own learning, for example, when they are asked to assess how well they think they have achieved at the end of a lesson. The spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development of pupils is good. All aspects are taught effectively through a rich and varied curriculum and additional activities such as educational visits and specialist visitors. Pupils learn to be safe, healthy and economically aware. There is good emphasis on cultural diversity through learning about different faiths, music and art and when participating in Arts Week and other festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Lessons are lively, well planned and resourced and use a range of styles to ensure pupils of all abilities learn well. This leads to enjoyment of learning and good progress. Teachers have high expectations that all pupils can succeed. Support staff are effectively used, the pace of lessons matches pupils' learning needs and questioning challenges pupils well. In some lessons more able pupils could be further stretched by being asked more complex questions. Pupils work together very well. In all lessons teachers use 'talking partners' or work in small groups to contribute strongly to their learning of basic skills. Assessment is well focussed and is leading to the development of clear targets for learning. At the end of some lessons pupils are being encouraged to assess how well they think they have achieved. Teachers' marking is always positive and frequently refers to learning objectives so that pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve. However, this is not yet consistent across classes and pupils are not always given sufficient time or support to read what has been written. This results in the same comments being written several times and slower progress in some aspects of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and provides a rich range of experiences that meet pupils' needs well. Provision for those with learning difficulties is a strength. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy skills to help bring up their low skills on entry. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is rich and well planned. The very strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development prepares them well for their next stage in learning. However, inadequate outdoor facilities constrain the curriculum for children's physical development in Reception classes. Pupils acquire a good range of work and life-skills, especially in learning how to work independently and in groups. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed well through the efficient use of the school's extensive resources. Good use is made of the wider community to enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors, particularly to enhance the creative and performing arts, with many pupils contributing to drama and musical events. The school's well-planned programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils learn to stay safe and to adopt healthy life-styles. Extra-curricular activities include sports and dance and are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care and guidance are provided for pupils. There are robust systems for ensuring their safety and security, for example, through the school's rigorous child protection procedures and its vetting of all adults that work in the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy at the school and that there are few incidents of bullying or harassment. The school takes these very seriously and has effective procedures for dealing with those few that arise. Pupils are guided well in their emotional and personal development, and, where necessary, individual counselling is provided. Looked-after children are closely monitored by a designated teacher. Strong partnerships with outside agencies bring expert advice to the assessment and planning for the needs of those with learning difficulties. The school's staff are also well-trained to assess and support these pupils. The very effective assessment unit draws pupils with multiple learning difficulties from a wide geographical area and helps many of them gradually to integrate into mainstream classes. Provision for those few children who are at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory. Additional support from outside agencies is currently being sought as most of them are new to the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership that is valued highly by parents, pupils and staff. She works in a very effective and influential partnership with her deputy headteacher. They are supported well by a strong staff team who ensure that all pupils are included fully in the school's programme and achieve well. Good arrangements for

self-evaluation mean that the school has an accurate picture of how it is doing and what it needs to develop further. These have helped the school to make good progress since the last inspection. The views of parents and pupils are used effectively to inform aspects of improvement planning. Good subject leadership and management in English, ICT, the Foundation Stage and special educational needs help pupils to achieve well. The procedures to evaluate and target improvement in some other subjects are not as rigorous, although planned for further development. A re-organisation of the governing body has resulted in governors becoming increasingly involved in monitoring the quality of education provided and targeting improvement. They are kept well informed by the headteacher, and monitor how funds are used, although they do not as yet rigorously evaluate their effect on teaching and learning. The effective management along with improvements in the governing body, puts the school in a good position to improve further.

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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?	2	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	3	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	2	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Dear Children Thank you for being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. What we liked most about your school: You are all helped to feel special and important. Your teachers and other adults care for you very well and make sure that you are safe. You get on well together and are kind to each other both in lessons and in the playground. You behave well and listen carefully. This means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. All the adults put a lot of effort into helping you do well and try to make your lessons interesting. You enjoy your work and try hard to do what your teachers ask. We think you learn well. The school invites many visitors into school and puts on a lot of extra activities and trips out of school. We know you enjoy these very much. Mrs Harbour, the teachers and the governors who run your school are doing a good job and they want to make your school even better. Your parents think it is a good school, and we agree. What we have asked the school to do now: Help you to know and understand what you need to do to improve your work. Make sure that children in the Reception classes have a better area in which to play outside. We hope that you continue to be happy at school and learn well. Very best wishes Colin Henderson