



Field Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117161
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280000
Inspection dates 4 May 2006 to 5 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Neal Street
School category	Community		WD18 0WF
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923 227306
Number on roll	198	Fax number	01923 227306
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Richard Beeden
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Elizabeth Griffiths

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 4 May 2006 - 5 May 2006	Inspection number 280000
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school in Watford. Half the pupils are from British White backgrounds and the other half are from minority ethnic groups. An above average proportion, nearly a quarter of pupils, are in the early stages of learning to speak English. A significant percentage of pupils start at the school with levels of knowledge and understanding well below those expected nationally. A considerable proportion of pupils join part way through the school year. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to claim free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Field Infant School is a good school. The inspection confirms the school's judgement of its effectiveness, which is good. This is a popular school which works very effectively with parents. One parent said, 'Very high praise for Field Infants. Excellent teaching on all levels. The school feels very much like a little community'. Most pupils make good progress at the school because teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and care well for all pupils. Children are given a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching and leadership are effective. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage but standards remain below average by the start of Year 1, largely because of the significant proportion of pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain average standards by the time they leave. Pupils' enjoyment in their work develops positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is outstanding. Exciting themed weeks make learning fun and interesting. Assessment activities are used satisfactorily. However, pupil targets are not always used effectively to raise attainment. The role of coordinators is satisfactory but could be further developed in relation to the monitoring of standards and quality in their subjects. Improvement since the last inspection has been effective. For example, pupils' presentation skills and science standards have improved significantly. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision has been improved considerably. The school is in a good position to improve in the future. This is because the headteacher and senior management team provide very strong leadership and school development planning is effective. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of targets so that pupils understand more specifically what their next steps in learning could be and are clear when they have attained them. - Develop the role of subject coordinators so that they analyse standards and pupils' progress more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils start at the school, their levels of knowledge and understanding are well below levels expected. This is mainly because of the significant proportion of pupils who join the school with very little understanding of English and the many who have limited experience beyond the home. Pupils make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but overall, standards are below those expected by the start of Year 1 particularly in their skills of language, literacy and communication in English. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. This is because teachers develop key skills effectively. Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress well as a result of good quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also receive good support and achieve well because staff

use their individual education plans effectively. In the 2005 national assessments, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics, even though a significant proportion of pupils joined part way through the school year. Challenging targets were met in 2005. More able pupils are satisfactorily challenged and so the expected proportion of pupils attain higher levels. In science, pupils reach expected standards as a result of effective teaching methods, which make learning memorable. In ICT pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations, particularly with regard to data handling and computer aided design.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and assist pupils to make good progress in their learning. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Pupils respond positively to this, behaving excellently in lessons and around the school. Most work hard and maintain high levels of concentration during lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are integrated fully so that they, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, take part in all aspects of school life. Most pupils enjoy being in school. Their attendance is close to the national average and punctuality at the start of the day is generally good for most pupils. Pupils have sound opportunities to contribute to life in the community. They raise money for charities and present concerts for parents and friends. Pupils respond well to opportunities for them to have a say in the running of their school by contributing to decision making during assemblies. This stands them in good stead for their future education and economic well-being. The pupils understand well the need to stay safe and the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle. This is supported by the provision of fresh fruit at break time, the generally healthy options for mid-day meals and the additional physical activities arranged at lunchtime and after school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school emphasises the spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' growth through an understanding of Christianity, together with the teachings of other faiths. Moral and social issues are taught well and help the pupils to understand justice and respect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching has many strong features. Effective teaching methods include helping pupils to learn through paired discussion and providing practical activities that develop pupils' understanding. Consequently, basic skills are taught well. Teachers have good organisational skills and so time is used productively. Effective lesson planning means that all groups of pupils, including the more able, are suitably challenged and so make good progress. Teaching assistants give good support to children with learning difficulties and disabilities and extra tuition for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language is effective and

means that these pupils also achieve well. Pupils' attainment is assessed satisfactorily in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In Year 2, assessment sheets are used well for ICT and pupils learn how to evaluate their own successes against specific criteria. Teachers mark work effectively and so pupils know what they have done well. However, teachers do not consistently explain whether pupils have attained their group targets or discuss how this can be achieved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities effectively meet the needs of pupils. Pupils achieve well in developing literacy, numeracy and science skills because a varied programme of work has been planned. Resources including laptops and interactive white boards are used well to teach pupils ICT skills. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements in many subjects. Visitors and visits enrich pupils' opportunities effectively to learn about topics. For example, pupils really enjoyed a drama session with a visitor where they learnt about pirates. A visit to a local supermarket allowed Year 2 pupils to use their numeracy skills well and work together as a team to buy items totalling one pound. A satisfactory range of lunchtime and after-school clubs develops pupils' physical and language skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are cared for sensitively in a welcoming and friendly environment. Procedures for protecting and caring for those who are vulnerable are clear and thorough. The school makes all required checks on adults working in the school so that pupils are kept as safe as they can be. All members of staff understand and follow child protection and health and safety procedures conscientiously. The pupils say that they feel safe in school and have someone they can go to if they have anxieties or concerns. Risk assessments are undertaken for all off-site activities and regular safety checks are undertaken in school. Arrangements for the introduction of new pupils into the nursery are good. The rewards system is a valuable feature of the school. It encourages good behaviour, effort and success. The recent investment in small play equipment gives a real purpose to children's activities, particularly at lunch time. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to meet the staff and to receive progress reports. Group targets have been set in numeracy and literacy, but not all pupils fully understand the significance of these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership, which is clearly focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all the pupils. She is ably assisted by other members of the leadership team. This relatively new team has effectively undertaken

work to identify school strengths as well as areas for improvement. It is recognised that the role of coordinators is evolving and they could be more fully involved in on going evaluation of their subject areas. The enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher has helped to mould a really good and well-motivated team of staff; morale within the school is high. The school has valuable and effective self-evaluation procedures, which take into account the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. This is indicated through the priorities in the improvement plan, which is very relevant to the school's current needs. These are correctly focused on continuing to track pupils' progress and raise standards, so ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they can. Effective use of good quality self-evaluation has brought about good improvements since the last inspection. For example, standards of science and writing are considerably better. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve in the future. Governors know the school well through their regular visits and reports from many sources and they provide well-informed, critical challenge to the school as well as giving knowledgeable support in areas such as finance and personnel. Finances are managed and targeted appropriately, and their impact is checked to ensure that the school achieves good value for money in its spending.

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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	1	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	3	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	3	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	2	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

Thank you for helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch one assembly. You are lucky to go to such a good school. We think your school is good because: - your behaviour is excellent - you make good progress in English, mathematics and science by Year 2 - your headteacher has very good ideas about ways to improve the school - your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting - your teachers and teaching assistants care for you well - special weeks make school life more interesting - you effectively lead healthy and safe life styles - nearly all of you enjoy school. I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are: - improving the use of targets so that you are clearer about how to reach these and about when you have done them well - making sure that teachers in charge of the different subjects watch and assess your work more effectively. Keep up the wonderful work at Field Infant School.