

Hobletts Manor Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117197
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312529
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Timothy Bailey
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Hull
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Adeyfield Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 5JS
Telephone number	01442 213854
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the provision for children in the Foundation Stage and progress made in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1. Evidence was gathered from classroom visits, discussions with staff and pupils and examination of school documents, especially assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Hobletts Manor Infant and Nursery School is average in size for its type. Pupils mainly come from the surrounding area and about a tenth are from minority ethnic groups. Children start in the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion with a specific learning difficulty and/or disability. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing but it is still below that seen nationally.

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 where all pupils are treated as individuals within a very positive climate for learning. The school's own thorough self-evaluation supports this view. However, the inspection judges that there are also some outstanding features, reflecting what has been achieved since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents share this view. Comments such as, 'A fantastic school in which I have seen my child grow into a confident, well mannered child' and, 'My child's confidence has grown tremendously in the last two years' are just some of the many positive things that parents have to say about the school.

Achievement is good overall with some outstanding work evident in art, information and communication technology and the humanities where many pupils achieve levels above that expected for those of a similar age. Pupils make good progress across the school from low starting points to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The teacher assessments for Year 2 published in 2007 confirm good achievement. However, teacher assessments for the current year predict lower results because more of these pupils find learning difficult. Data for the pupils currently in Year 1 indicate an upturn for the following year, reflecting a strong link between the variability of each year group at this school and the standards attained. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Good progress is made in these basic skills as pupils move up through the school. All pupils make good progress in using their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read. The skills of handwriting are taught well from an early age with average numbers of pupils writing at the expected level. However, the proportion of these pupils writing at the higher Level 3 is below the national average because of inaccurate punctuation.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are excellent. Very good provision for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development facilitates the opportunity for all pupils to gain a greater understanding of others and the world around them. Relationships are very positive in the classrooms and around the school. Pupil behaviour is very good. Those displaying social and emotional difficulties respond well to very good levels of support and encouragement. Attendance has continued to climb to average levels. This is because learning is exciting and many interesting activities are planned for pupils. Many relish the opportunity to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills through mind mapping and working with others in discussion. Older pupils display a thirst for further learning with extra work of high quality completed in their 'learning at home' books. Pupils display a very good understanding of healthy living through physical education, extra club activities and growing vegetables in the school garden. They know how to keep themselves safe and who to go to if they need extra support. The school council facilitates the very good development of citizenship skills and participation of pupils in school improvement.

The quality of education is good. The very positive climate for learning and good curriculum encourages all to succeed. Teaching and learning are good. Good teaching was noted in all lessons seen during the inspection but not all contained sufficient pace and levels of challenge to make them outstanding. Teamwork in classrooms is a strong feature because teaching assistants are well qualified and work actively alongside teachers to ensure all pupils succeed. Detailed planning is common in all lessons. Pupils who find learning more difficult make good progress and are supported well. Opportunities are provided regularly for more able pupils to develop their thinking and research skills through a wide range of innovative activities. The quality of marking is good overall. Teachers provide useful comments to boost the confidence

of pupils and write helpful tips for them to work at. As a result, pupils are actively engaged in reviewing their learning and know what they need to do next to improve.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. Procedures for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils comply with statutory requirements. Risk assessment is robust. Assessment procedures are thorough. The progress of each pupil is tracked very carefully and specific support allocated where extra help is needed to raise pupil achievement. Many parents speak very highly about the quality of support that their child receives and value the strength of the home school partnership. High quality displays effectively celebrate the achievement of pupils and boosts self-esteem.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The headteacher and deputy headteacher set very high expectations with a clear focus on whole school improvement. Targets are used well to raise standards. Teamwork is a very strong feature and specific responsibilities are delegated to all staff within a context of distributed leadership. As a result, subject leaders play a vital role in school improvement and evaluation. Governance is now excellent. Governors are actively engaged in strategic planning and participate fully in the effective development of the school. Procedures for monitoring and review are very good because the whole school community is fully engaged in the process. Budgetary planning and management is very efficient. Resources are used judiciously both to raise standards and improve the quality of the building for the benefit of the community. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection and the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for all children in the Foundation Stage is good. Parental comments such as, 'I am really pleased with the education my son is receiving' confirm the significant level of improvement on that seen at the previous inspection. Children start in the Nursery from a very low base, especially in language and personal and social development. Good teaching and effective support ensure that all children make good progress across the key stage. Basic skills are taught well with a high emphasis on creative work. The balance between adult led tasks and activities that children can choose themselves is good. Activities are planned very carefully to ensure full integration of learning experiences both inside and outside the classrooms. However, the absence of covered areas inhibits the ability of staff to utilise the outdoor environment at all times. Assessment records are very thorough and these provide a comprehensive picture of each child's development. Leadership and management are very good and effective teamwork ensures that provision is consistently good in the Nursery and Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 in writing.
- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Provide outdoor covered areas for the Foundation Stage.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hobletts Manor Infant and Nursery School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5JS

I would like to thank you all for making me feel so welcome during my visit. It is very clear to me that you all enjoy being at school and find learning fun. I saw excellent behaviour wherever I went and couldn't help but notice that all of you try your best to complete your work. Your 'learning at home' books are a delight to read and show how much you enjoy your lessons. Many of your parents told me that the school is a very good place for you to learn in and I totally agree with them.

Mrs Hull is an excellent headteacher. This is because she manages the staff really well and together they all work very hard as a team to improve the school. Governors also work very closely with Mrs Hull and the staff to ensure that the school continues to improve for the benefit of everybody. The Nursery and Reception areas are now much better but there are no outdoor covered areas for children to play under when the weather is wet. However, the displays of your work, beautiful paintings on the walls, the well-maintained vegetable garden and grounds make sure that the school is a wonderful place where you can work, learn and play. The staff provide outstanding levels of care and support for you all, always taking the time and trouble to listen to your concerns.

Many of the lessons that teachers provide for you are good with many interesting things for you to do. In the future, all of the teachers are going to try hard to make their lessons even better so that you achieve your very best. You can play your part by writing as neatly as possible and trying to include capital letters and full stops in all your sentences.

Once again, thank you very much for making me feel so welcome in your school and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann HMI