

# Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 117289              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Hertfordshire       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 312559              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 24–25 November 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Stephen Walker      |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |   |
| School (total)   | 205   |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0   |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body                                      |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mrs Anne Peat   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Miss Traci Ali  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 27 June 2005  |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                                |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected                                |
| <b>School address</b>  | Berry Lane<br>Rickmansworth<br>Hertfordshire<br>WD3 4BT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01923720507   |
| <b>Fax number</b>  | 01923712936   |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is small school compared with other primary schools. It is situated on the edge of Rickmansworth and serves both pupils from the immediate vicinity of Mill End as well as many who travel in from Chorleywood and Maple Cross. Although the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, there are a significant number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is provided through the Reception class. Children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding that varies from year to year, although standards are generally above those expected for children of a similar age. The school has been awarded the Active Sports Mark and National Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school provides a good standard of education. It runs very smoothly and calmly on a day-to-day basis. There is a very positive atmosphere which supports the school motto that 'every child is a success story'. The headteacher provides excellent leadership which greatly supports the success of the school. Parents praise the management of the school and the dedication of the teachers. One parent wrote, 'This is a wonderful school for my children. It provides a first-rate environment for children to realise their academic potential as well as learning life skills and viewing education as an exciting and enjoyable experience'.

Pupils make good progress. The vast majority consistently achieve standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average by the time they leave the school. The school is increasingly using assessment information effectively to track progress. Consequently, intervention support for pupils who require additional help is raising achievement across the school. The school is also active in accelerating the progress of the higher attaining pupils. A key focus in the school is to increase the number of pupils who gain the higher levels in writing in national tests at the end of Year 6.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding which reflects the high quality of pastoral care, guidance and support in the school. Pupils behave exceptionally well and demonstrate excellent personal qualities. Pupils from all backgrounds settle quickly into the school and all pupils show considerable respect for other cultures and customs. A key strength of the school is the warm and welcoming approach to all pupils and parents. Pupils enjoy their time at school and develop into friendly and confident individuals. One parent said 'the school is a very happy place and children are encouraged to be considerate of others'.

Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well within a supportive learning environment. Pupils enjoy the lessons and are eager to make progress. However, the school misses opportunities to identify and share best practice in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning further in all lessons. High quality display work ensures that classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment although the school in general is in need of considerable refurbishment. A very good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities greatly supports the pupils' high levels of enjoyment and good progress. The school is at the early stages of assessing standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. There is good academic support for pupils and detailed marking is effective in showing them the next steps in their learning.

Strong partnerships exist with external support services and other schools in the area. The school is an integral part of the local community and enjoys a good reputation in the local area. While leadership and management are good overall, subject leaders are not yet fully involved in monitoring teaching or standards in their subjects in order to raise achievement further. The highly effective leadership of the headteacher, dedication of the staff and emphasis on both the academic and personal development of the pupils indicate that this school has good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Detailed planning and high expectations ensure that teaching and learning is good in communication, language, literacy and numeracy. There is a good balance between adult directed activities and free choice activities provided. Children make good progress and develop

their basic skills well. The children are articulate and demonstrate a wide vocabulary. The early skills of reading and writing are taught well according to a structured programme so that the children develop a good knowledge of letter sounds. However, children do not always have the opportunity to use these skills for writing during child led activities. Imaginative resources for outdoor play contribute effectively to children's good progress in physical development. There is a good variety of planned outings, including a visit to Kew Gardens and to the Natural History Museum to research dinosaurs. The Reception is developing baseline assessments in order to measure the progress of the children with greater accuracy. The high standard of care, guidance and support ensures the good personal development of the children. They are confident with the staff and are independent in the way they access the resources in the classroom. The Reception is well led and staff liaise very closely with parents on a regular basis.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of professional feedback for teachers to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching.
- Develop the roles of the subject leaders so that they are effective in the monitoring of standards and teaching in their subject areas in order to raise achievement further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and most pupils leave the school with well above average attainment. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress to reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The school has been very successful in improving the standards of reading overall in Key Stage 1 and increasing the number of pupils who reach the higher levels in mathematics. From Year 3 to 6, pupils make good progress so that standards by Year 6 are well above average. Assessment information shows that pupils have consistently made good progress over the last four years. Evidence from pupils' work during the inspection demonstrates all classes are making good progress during the current year. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

There is an extremely positive atmosphere in the school and the pupils are friendly, polite and very proud of their school. Attendance of pupils is above average and they thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils effectively develop their awareness of the multicultural diversity of society and warmly welcome pupils from all parts of the world. They are sensitive towards the feelings of others and appreciative of the world around them. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both through eating sensibly and taking exercise. The pupils regularly raise money for charities and are presently arranging gift boxes for less fortunate children through the Samaritans. They make a considerable contribution to the local community by visiting the elderly in Buckland's sheltered housing and taking part in the Rickmansworth Festival Parade. The school council is responsible for a detailed action plan for improvement in the school building and grounds. Pupils' basic skills develop well and pupils' ability to work with others is excellent. As a result, they are effectively prepared for their secondary education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and expect high standards from the pupils. Pupils really enjoy the lessons and are eager to learn. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall although there is some variation across the school. The school does not fully share best practice in teaching and learning in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons. Most teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and consolidate their understanding. Teachers plan their lessons well and consistently use learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. They are increasingly using assessment to inform their planning so that it meets the different learning needs of the pupils. In the best lessons, teachers check understanding and pupils evaluate their own learning against the learning success criteria. However, teachers do not always use the range of teaching strategies to enliven the learning experience of the pupils. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and effectively support pupils who require additional help with their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

As well as a clear emphasis on the key skills in literacy, numeracy and science, the school also provides a wide range of highly relevant and interesting learning opportunities for all pupils. It is currently working hard to ensure that there is greater consistency in both planning and assessment across the school. The curriculum is enhanced well by the themed weeks such as 'Round the World' and 'Healthy Living' which provide cross curricular activities across the school. In addition, all Key Stage 2 pupils learn French and learn to play a musical instrument. Information communication technology is used imaginatively in many of the subject areas. The programme for personal, social and health education contributes well to the pupils' personal development. The variety of school visits for each year including the Year 6 residential to Dorset and the Year 4 visit to the British Museum contribute greatly to the pupils' strong personal and academic development. Similarly, the breadth of extra-curricular provision, especially sports activities, supports pupils personal development well and adds considerable enjoyment to their school experience.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school's pastoral care is strong and reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development. Procedures for safeguarding children meet the current government requirements and measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are fully in place and rigorously implemented. Effective systems to help the children settle into school and then move on to secondary school ensure a smooth transition at both stages. Pupils who find learning more difficult receive good support and subsequently achieve well. The school is increasingly using assessment information well to identify underachievers and put intervention strategies into place. All pupils have targets based on prior attainment and these are effectively monitored on a regular basis. Good quality marking of pupils' work is regular and provides details of what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils have clear success targets that are based on the learning objectives for each lesson.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher provides energetic and highly organised leadership of this successful school. She is constantly encouraging and enabling all staff to work together on the continuous improvement of the school. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share her focused approach to promoting good standards of behaviour, enjoyment in learning, high levels of care and good attainment for all pupils. The new leadership team works well together in supporting the improvements across the school and is setting challenging targets to further raise standards. Subject leaders are developing their roles, although they are not all fully engaged in the monitoring of standards and teaching in their subject areas in order to raise achievement further. Support staff are valued, well deployed and their skills effectively used. Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for improvement and carry out their statutory duties effectively. However, they are not yet fully involved in the development and monitoring of the school improvement plan.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?              | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 2 |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress                           | 2 |

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education  | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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?   | 2 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   |
| 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 eliminated   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 2   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2   |
| 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School, Rickmansworth, WD3 4BT

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We particularly enjoyed seeing you all in assembly and were most impressed by your enthusiasm and very positive attitudes to school. Arnett Hills is a good school and your personal development is outstanding. The school is an extremely happy place and runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. We know that your parents and carers are very pleased with the standards in the school. There are many positive things about your school:

- you are achieving standards that are well above the national average
- you demonstrate excellent personal qualities
- you really enjoy coming to school and try hard in lessons
- you behave excellently and are really good at taking care of one another
- you warmly welcome all children to your school
- you provide good support for a number of charities
- you take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities
- you have an excellent headteacher who leads your school outstandingly well
- your teachers and support staff work hard to make lessons interesting for you.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make your school even better:

- encourage teachers to share their ideas so that all the teaching and your learning are excellent
- ensure that the teachers responsible for subjects observe teaching and keep a good check on your standards in these.

We know that you are very proud of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy learning. We wish you every success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector