

Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122556
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314324
Inspection dates	9–10 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Elway
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Cross
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Whitaker Close Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 7QH
Telephone number	01777 702728
Fax number	01777 719527

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized Infant and Nursery school. Virtually all pupils are White British and speak English as a first language. The proportion of pupils who need extra support with their learning or require physical support is broadly average, as are the proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. At the time of inspection, no pupil had a statement of special educational need. On entry to the school, attainment covers the full normal range although there are fluctuations year-on-year. Overall, when they start in the Nursery, children work at levels below those expected for their ages, particularly in early reading, writing and calculating skills and creative development. There has been a recent reorganisation and some coordinators are new to their roles. The school has the Healthy Schools Gold and the Active Mark Sports awards.

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. It provides an effective quality of education for its pupils and gives good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its current overall effectiveness. Pupils' personal development is excellent. They make particularly good progress in acquiring personal and social skills, because of the strong emphasis all adults who work in the school place on this aspect of learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. Behaviour is good and pupils learn to take turns and share. They really enjoy lessons and are keen to come to school. Attendance has improved and it is better than the national average.

Inspection findings concur with the school's analysis of assessment data. This shows that pupils make good overall progress in all areas of learning. Standards are below those expected when children start at the school and rise to levels that are broadly average by the end of Year 2. However, the school has rightly recognised that developing pupils' awareness of the link between the sounds of words and the different groups of letters that represent them is an area for improvement.

The curriculum is outstandingly good. It is effectively enriched by a very good range of trips and visits. Over three quarters of the pupils, from Reception upwards, attend at least one of the many clubs. Teachers are adept at maximising opportunities for learning, such as planting seeds, using video recorders and cameras and hatching chicks. Teaching and learning are good and lead to boys and girls of all abilities making good overall progress in their learning and achieving well. Teachers' planning is good and good use is made of opportunities to question pupils and develop their language skills. Marking is regular and helpful, but it is variable and adults' writing in pupils' workbooks is not always of the highest quality. Assessment is good and is used effectively to tailor learning situations accurately to individual pupils' needs.

Care and welfare are good. Pupils are taught extremely well about the importance of healthy lifestyle and diet. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are unanimously supportive of the school and appreciative of its work. They are kept well informed about the work their children do and the progress they are making.

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is particularly effective. She is clear-sighted and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors fulfil their roles well and are strong supporters of the school. They visit regularly and have effectively developed their remit as critical friends of the school. Because of the good improvement since the previous inspection and the skilled leadership, the school has a secure capacity to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into the Foundation Stage because of good induction procedures. Staff all work together well with a common sense of purpose. Progress and achievement are good in the Nursery and Reception classes. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make and say such things as 'Our child looks forward to going to school each day.' Teaching and learning are good. As a result, children attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected by the time they transfer into Year 1. This is particularly the case in their personal and social development. Children who are not performing as well as expected are swiftly identified, given help and the impact of the intervention tracked carefully until the problem is

resolved. Any child with particular physical needs is integrated fully into all activities. Similarly, children who show the potential to achieve above expected levels are given every chance to do so. The school has now identified the need to develop the curriculum for outdoor learning further and to put in place the requirements of the new Foundation Phase ready for September.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' knowledge of how sounds are represented by combinations of letters in writing.
- Ensure that the quality of adults' marking and writing in pupils' workbooks is of a consistently high standard.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, achieving standards which are at least in line and often above the average for their ages, despite their lower than average attainment on entry to Nursery. Children settle well into the Nursery and Reception class and make good gains in their learning, due to the good quality of the provision. This good progress continues through Year 1 and Year 2 and achievement is good overall, with pupils achieving the challenging targets set for them. Pupils who need extra support with their learning and those with physical disabilities are supported effectively so that they achieve well in relation to their abilities. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the average. The school's tracking of standards has identified that whilst overall achievement is good some pupils still need extra support with learning about the sounds different letter blends make. Writing has been identified as an area for further whole school development as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is excellent. The school encourages children, from Nursery onwards to make choices and to learn to take on responsibility. Pupils generally relate well to each other and disputes and bad feelings are rare and are dealt with speedily. Boys and girls who need extra support with their learning and those with particular physical needs are integrated fully in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy being in school and attendance is above average. They have a voice in the way the school is developed through the school council and classroom discussions. They have particularly good opportunities to become involved in the life of the community through such events as visiting the local hospital. They develop good understanding of the need to stay safe and an excellent understanding of the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle through science and technology lessons and choosing healthy food at lunchtimes. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and teachers and learning assistants work together effectively resulting in good progress for pupils. Planning for lessons is good and teachers

frequently plan together to ensure that pupils in all classes have similar opportunities. Teachers explain at the start of each lesson how pupils and staff are going to know that lessons are successful. This effectively motivates pupils to learn. Teaching is matched well to the needs of pupils from all groups, including those who need extra support with their learning. Resources, such as interactive white boards, are used well to make learning interesting and exciting. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion so that pupils have good opportunity to explain their answers and develop their speaking skills. Assessment is good. It is regular, accurate and information gained is used effectively. Marking is regular and encouraging. However, it is variable in quality and does not always give pupils an exemplar of high quality adult writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The broad, balanced and very interesting activities planned for pupils are relevant to their lives and as a result, successfully inspire them to engage in lessons. For example, pupils watch chicks hatching from eggs and pupils regularly use digital cameras and videos to record work and experiences. As a result, they enjoy their work hugely. Topics very effectively encourage healthy lifestyles and awareness of safety issues. Visitors and visits, such as trips to the local garden centre or planting 'magic beans,' link in with the learning themes very effectively and are greatly enjoyed. A very good range of clubs is attended by the majority of pupils, from Reception upwards. This extends and enlivens the curriculum extremely well. Provision for personal, social and health education is exceptionally good and has a significant positive impact on pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of the care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. Pastoral support is very good. Pupils know what to do if they have a disagreement in the playground or elsewhere. They are confident any issues will be swiftly resolved. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Young children settle quickly into school because of the good support and encouragement they receive. Older pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Progress of pupils is tracked effectively from Foundation Stage onwards. The individual needs of potentially higher attaining pupils and those who need extra support with their learning are identified quickly. The school meets these needs effectively through carefully planned interventions. There are good procedures for monitoring academic progress. However, procedures to give pupils guidance in their learning are variable. While pupils have very clear knowledge of what they need to do to improve in English, fewer can confidently explain what their individual targets are in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school particularly well. She has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on her regular and astute monitoring. This information is shared openly with staff and governors and used effectively to highlight areas for improvement in the development plan. The governing body are strong supporters of the school and feel confident to question and challenge the leadership. All legal

requirements are met and financial management is good. A number of coordinators are new to their roles, however. Whilst monitoring of pupils' learning is rigorous and accurate, the school acknowledges that there is scope to involve subject coordinators even more in the monitoring of teaching.

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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	2

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 April 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School, Retford, DN22 7QH

I am writing to thank you for the way you made me feel welcome when I visited your school. I especially want to thank all those of you I met and talked with. This was very helpful to me and I enjoyed hearing about your work, the games you play and how much you enjoy being at school. I want to share with you what I found out about your school.

These are the things that are really good about your school.

- Your teachers provide you with a really excellent range of exciting things to learn about, such as hatching out your chicks, cooking and visiting interesting places.
- You enjoy school and attend regularly.
- You make extremely good progress in learning always to think about other people's feelings and how to get along with each other.
- Teaching is good and you learn a lot.
- Teachers look after you well and you learn an outstanding amount about how to stay healthy.
- Your headteacher knows a great deal about your school and the work you all do.

The things I have asked your teachers to do next.

- To help you do even better in writing.
- To help you even more by making sure that you can understand what they have written when they mark your books.

I really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. You can help to make your school even better by continuing to try your hardest and to be as helpful as you can be to each other. I wish you all well for the future.

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector