

Hawes Down Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101591
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323482
Inspection date	12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	185
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Blackburn
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Duffin
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Mead West Wickham BR4 0BA
Telephone number	020 8777 4420
Fax number	020 8777 1076

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection team evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the:

- progress and attainment of different groups, including boys
- quality of leadership and management systems
- school's awareness and developments in respect of community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, chair of governors, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits were made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average infant school. Pupils commence in September or January after their fourth birthday, depending on the month of their birth. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is about the same as in most schools, although there are few pupils whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special need is much higher than the national average. This is largely due to the fact that the school has a unit for pupils with severe learning difficulties (the Special Opportunities Unit). A privately managed after school club meets on the site.

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. Some features are outstanding. Parents are most happy with the school and are glad that they chose it for their children. Communication is very effective. They rightly praise the very committed and supportive staff and the outstanding care that the staff take of their children. This is one of its major strengths, resulting in a family atmosphere that permeates the whole school. The headteacher personally greets the children and parents each morning. Consequently families are known individually and there is quick access for any concerns. Parents really appreciate this. The staff know the pupils extremely well and this supports the excellent atmosphere and behaviour in classes. In turn, this contributes to the pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning and enhances their good progress. The exciting curriculum sparks pupils' interest and adds extra enjoyment to their time in school. One parent writes, 'The school organises many activities which our daughter always finds interesting and fun and she often arrives home glowing with news of the day's events.' A Chinese calligrapher was working in the school during the inspection and the pupils were fascinated by the activities. This work also contributed to their understanding of global culture.

Good teaching helps the pupils to achieve well by the end of the Reception class and on through to the end of Year 2, but boys' English work has not always been as good as that of the girls. The school has addressed this and amended the curriculum so that it appeals more to boys. For example, it has successfully used male role models, such as poets, to engage boys in writing their own poetry and also male authors to interest them in literature. This is helping to boost their progress in reading and writing. Overall school results in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Larger proportions than nationally reach the higher levels, although overall results have not been as high in the past two years as previously. This is mainly because the nature of the Special Opportunities Unit has changed. It now caters for complex learning difficulties instead of moderate learning difficulties. Pupils in the Unit also achieve well because of the very good quality of teaching they receive, excellent planning for their individual needs and the very careful assessments of their progress. These are used very effectively to plan the next steps in these pupils' learning. Pupils whose first language is not English and pupils who have difficulties learning the basic skills also make good progress.

The curriculum is ever vibrant because staff use special days or weeks that offer something different from the normal routines. Arts Week included African drumming, which supported pupils' cultural development. Visitors, such as an environmentalist, provide interesting information for pupils on wildlife matters and this promotes their enthusiasm in natural science. In addition to the work in lessons, pupils have excellent opportunities to attend a wide range of extra activities. Some, such as the sports club, contribute to their healthy lifestyles, while others widen their interests. Good links have developed with local secondary schools and are extending. Pupils from these schools work alongside the pupils and have supported their information and communication technology and science skills. Staff's accurate knowledge of individual pupils is reflected in the provision made. A 'Chatter Club' has been created for extremely shy children, which is boosting their confidence in speaking.

The school gives excellent attention to pupils' personal, social and health education within the broad curriculum that it offers. Visits by police and road safety officers, for example, support pupils' understanding of safe living. Staff inform the children about the potential dangers of the sun and so pupils keep in the shade or wear sunscreen on hot, sunny days.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy school, as shown in their well above-average attendance. They have an excellent understanding of safe and healthy living, eating a variety of fruit and joining in the 'walking buses'. Their knowledge of 'eco' matters and sustainability is excellent for their age. They take very good care of the grounds, recycle paper constantly and have regular duties to keep the environment clean. The pupils' eco committee has its own imaginative action plan. Pupils relate well to the local community, for example with local churches. They also take harvest produce to some older people. They engage with other schools in dance festivals. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils have a voice through questionnaires and the school council. Staff listen to their suggestions. For example, a pupil suggested a school tie as part of the uniform and wide consultation followed. Pupils gain a very good understanding of the needs of others through the regular opportunities to donate to deserving charities both locally and those that are more global. Through these they have learned about the importance of clean water and the shortages that many countries suffer. Pupils from the Special Opportunities Unit integrate well in other classes and this brings social benefits for all pupils.

The governing body has worked hard to reduce a large deficit budget four years ago and the finances are now close to balance. Some of the governors visit the school, which gives them a better understanding of the school's provision. Governors' representatives attend the school self-evaluation day, get involved in a review of past priorities and in setting future ones. The school's practice of community cohesion is effective, but the lack of a formal plan and oversight on the part of the governors mean that the review of this statutory requirement is not as tight as it could be.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough and up to date. Marking of English is excellent and pupils understand their individual targets in order to move on to the next level. However, these individual targets do not yet extend to mathematics to help pupils know the actions they must take to get to the next level. Staff give very good attention to creating a neat and tidy working environment. They display pupils' work most attractively and set out interesting displays which promote pupils' spiritual development. One display used a variety of shells, so that pupils could explore line and colour in nature.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher form a very good working partnership and give a strong steer to the school. The senior leadership team is developing well under their direction. There are excellent arrangements to track pupils' progress. These are used effectively to pick up on pupils who are not making expected progress and to form intervention groups so that pupils get back on track. Good arrangements are made to monitor pupils' work and teaching quality. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and shows a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education because this area of the school's work is well led and managed. The good induction procedures mean that children feel welcomed and settle into school routines quickly and confidently. Parents are encouraged to help their children at home by letting teachers know what their children enjoy doing. Teachers give parents good information about how best to help their children, for example when reading with them at home. The care and welfare of the children are excellent. Children form very good relationships with adults in the class and with each other. They begin school with the skills and knowledge expected for their age; they make good progress overall

and achieve well. Most notable is the progress in their personal development and in learning basic literacy skills. Children come from a variety of pre-school settings and soon learn to get along together very well, whatever their backgrounds. They are all extremely well behaved and really enjoy school. Staff have recently introduced a programme for teaching letter sounds and names and children are beginning to write confidently and use their knowledge when reading. Lessons are interesting, with many activities that cover all areas of learning. The outside area is used well so that children can learn about the natural world as well as practise their ball skills and ride wheeled toys. There are times, however, when children sit for too long on the carpet. This limits the time they have to choose activities for themselves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the use of target setting to mathematics so that pupils know how to improve their work and to get to the next level.
- Evaluate the arrangements for community cohesion through the introduction of audits by the governing body of the school's provision.

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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
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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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?	1

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 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

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawes Down Infant School, West Wickham, BR4 0BA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We were very pleased to meet you. You attend a good school and your parents are delighted that you are members of Hawes Down Infant School. You make good progress and reach a standard above that which we usually see. We were very interested in your eco club and to learn about your care for the environment. Your behaviour is outstanding and you clearly enjoy school a great deal. You also have an outstanding understanding of keeping safe and living healthily. Your teachers take excellent care of you and the staff provide a most interesting range of lessons for you. What a lot of extra activities you also take part in! These help to widen your interests. You take a keen interest in the needs of others and we were delighted to learn of the charities that you help to support to help those in special need.

There are two areas in which we think the school can improve. The first one is to extend the targets that you have in English to mathematics, which will help you to make even more progress. The second is for the governing body to have a system to check the way the school encourages you to understand different people's lives and beliefs locally and in the wider world.

Thank you once again for your helpfulness when we visited and for letting us see you at work. We wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to do your best.

Yours faithfully

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector