

# Hyde Heath Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110237
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325114
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Vivienne McTiffen

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	60
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 Susan Rayne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Mouldsdales
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 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>	Weedon Hill Hyde Heath Amersham HP6 5RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 783 835
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 783 835

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Hyde Heath Infant School is smaller than average. Most pupils are from a White British background and live near the school. A small number are from other backgrounds, including European and mixed heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is low, the majority of these having moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class. There is a privately run pre-school and wraparound care club on site. The school has a number of national awards including the Healthy School Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hyde Heath Infant School is a good school. An outstanding feature is the level of care offered to pupils which is greatly appreciated by parents, most of whom support the school in all aspects of its work. One commented 'The school provides a very welcoming, comfortable and secure atmosphere for both parents and children.' A strong 'family' feel ensures pupils are valued and happy which leads to excellent personal development and well-being. They thoroughly enjoy school and speak with enthusiasm about the range of exciting activities on offer. Pupils work extremely well together and have a very good understanding of the need to behave, resulting in impeccable behaviour. There is a very strong focus on ensuring all pupils are included and enabled to do their best. The school makes use of an outstanding range of external partners that benefit pupils. In particular, links with parents are very strong and the school is at the heart of the village community, enabling pupils to benefit from, and play an important part in, the life of the locality. The school is in a good position to continue to improve.

Standards are above average overall, a picture that has been consistently sustained for several years, and one that reflects the consistently good teaching. As children start school with abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age, this represents good achievement. An area that has seen the greatest improvement is writing. At the time of the last inspection, standards in writing were average. However, through determined efforts to focus on handwriting and spelling and give pupils more opportunity to write, standards rose rapidly to be well above average in 2008. The school is now turning its attention to mathematics where standards have been consistently above average but dropped slightly in 2008. It is aware of the need to provide further opportunities for problem solving, more practical activities and the development of thinking skills.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. The headteacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward and has successfully succeeded in raising standards especially in writing. Central to the school's success has been its ability to accurately evaluate its own effectiveness and set challenging but realistic targets for improvement. As a result, considerable strides have been made in all aspects of its work. Teaching has improved, resulting in good levels of pupil achievement. The curriculum is good and has been strengthened through a more creative approach to planning and linking subjects together. Systems for judging pupil progress are stringent and provide valuable information for matching work to abilities. There is a commitment to utilising the skills of staff to provide varied and exciting activities. Due to the nature of a small school, staff have responsibility for several areas of the curriculum but their monitoring role is currently underdeveloped. The school recognises the need to extend the management structure more widely beyond the headteacher and to develop managers' monitoring and evaluation skills.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start school with a range of skills and abilities that are generally in line with those expected. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress so that when they join Year 1, most have achieved the expected goals and many exceed them. Good teaching identifies areas where children's skills are underdeveloped and provides stimulating activities that lead to good progress. There is a strong focus on preparing for the next stage of learning, especially in literacy. A safe and supportive environment promotes

children's well-being. As a result, personal development is good. Interesting tasks encourage children to explore and find out for themselves, while focus groups develop skills. During the inspection, children busily engaged in weighing activities, talking to each other about what they were doing and working well together. Behaviour is good. Children follow instructions well although, sometimes, teaching is a little too directed and does not allow them to take responsibility for the choices they make. Parents are kept well informed of their children's education. Strengthening links with pre-school settings means there are good arrangements for starting school. In order to maximise its use for all areas of learning the school recognises the need to develop the outdoor area further.

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

- Establish new initiatives in mathematics to raise standards even further to equal those reached in reading and writing.
- Extend the management structure and enable staff at all levels to develop the necessary skills to effectively monitor provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that, by the time they leave Year 2, standards are above average overall. In the 2008 national assessments, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels in reading was above average, while standards in writing were well above average. Standards in mathematics have been high over the last four years. However, they were just above average in 2008 because fewer pupils than expected achieved the higher levels. Nevertheless, these pupils did better than pupils nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from other than White British backgrounds make good progress because of the level of support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy school tremendously, hence the comment, 'There's so much we enjoy, it's hard to choose!'. Above-average attendance further highlights pupils' eagerness to be in school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Older pupils are reflective when completing their personalised learning logs and consider the feelings of others during circle time and assemblies. Because the school is careful to focus on cultural diversity, pupils learn about the world beyond their immediate environment and offer sensitive suggestions for making newcomers welcome. They take their roles as school councillors very seriously and feel their work benefits all. They established the Buddy Bench for those who 'may be lonely at playtimes'. Compared with their peers elsewhere they have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They offer a range of suggestions on how to stay healthy and are fully aware of the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. Pupils have a good awareness of how to remain safe and know who to speak to if they have a problem. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community by taking on roles of responsibility and engaging in local events, maintaining links with the local church, residents and businesses. The high standards they reach in basic skills prepare them well for later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers know pupils very well. A strength is the quality of relationships upon which a thriving learning environment is built. This is valued by parents. One commented, 'The teachers have a very special rapport with all the pupils.' Pupils really enjoy practical activities - a current focus for the school in mathematics. They develop confidence and knowledge by using basic everyday skills. For example, during the inspection, Year 1 pupils used real money to solve shopping problems while those in Year 2 offered critiques to their peers after they had presented their work to the class. Teaching assistants provide good support but, on occasion, they are not fully involved in all parts of lessons. Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and how they should behave. As a result, pupils work hard to do their best. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards when pupils are often asked to demonstrate their understanding. Planning is thorough and lessons have clear direction. Pupils are aware of what they should learn and tasks are generally well matched to ability although, sometimes, they find tasks too hard or too easy. Teachers' marking provides positive comments and helps pupils understand how to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

A fully inclusive curriculum, based upon topics and themed weeks, provides varied and interesting activities. There is a good balance between extending knowledge and developing skills. A good range of clubs, trips and visitors enhances pupils' experiences. For example, when learning about Florence Nightingale in history, a nurse visited school to help pupils draw comparisons with the past, and the pupils also engaged in a drama workshop. Teacher and outside expertise is very well utilised especially in PE, music and in science, which is effectively planned to link with literacy and numeracy. Personal and social education is a strong feature. Clear emphasis on linking letters with sounds (phonics) and speaking and listening improves language and writing skills, which are strong. Good links are made across subjects and pupils have plenty of opportunity to extend their writing. The school has rightly identified the need to raise the profile of mathematics even further through a range of problem-solving and practical activities. Provision in information and communication technology is good but the school lacks sufficient software to support learning in some subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Hyde Heath is an extremely caring school. Committed staff forge strong relationships and take excellent care of pupils. The school welcomes newcomers from other countries and makes good use of this cultural diversity within the school to promote understanding of the wider world. Pupils are consistently encouraged to do their best and their efforts are praised. The Healthy School Award has very effectively helped the school raise the profile of healthy eating. The Record of Achievement successfully celebrates academic and personal efforts. This, together with participation in local and school events, has a very positive effect on personal development. Robust procedures ensure pupils remain safe. There are very good systems for judging pupil progress which means the school knows exactly how well individuals are doing. This information is used very well to identify weaknesses and help teachers to match work to ability. This is a

good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are fully aware of their numeracy and literacy targets and they are actively involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

At the core of the school's ethos is the outstanding focus on the inclusion of all pupils which the school achieves effectively and sensitively, enabling all to feel valued. The school engages well with the local community and is mindful of seeking opportunities to increase pupils' awareness of communities beyond their own. The school evaluates itself very well and recognises its strengths and weaknesses. Performance is analysed thoroughly and targets for school improvement are based on a good understanding of needs. As a result, achievement and standards are good and pupils' personal development is excellent. The school's deservedly good reputation has grown and its population has expanded. Governors support the school well, are effectively committed to continued improvement and are clear about areas for development. Office staff help the school run efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Money is well targeted to enhance provision. The school has recently undergone extensive refurbishment which has improved accommodation to benefit pupils' learning.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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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	2
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?	1

## 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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hyde Heath Infant School, Amersham, HP6 5RW

I enjoyed my visit to your school recently. Thank you for making me feel welcome. I particularly enjoyed seeing your lessons, the assembly, and talking to you about the exciting things you do.

Your school is a good school. It looks after you very well. Your headteacher and teachers work hard to care for you and make sure you are happy. You really seem to enjoy school because you learn about so many interesting things and people. You all get on very well together like a big family! I was impressed by the way you judge how well you are doing and help each other to improve. Your behaviour is excellent and your attendance is better than normal. You are doing well in literacy and numeracy. Your writing is very good because you get lots of practice and learn your spelling and letter sounds. You progress well with your work as a result of good teaching.

Even though your school is a good school, there are some things it could do to improve. Your headteacher knows that even though you do well in mathematics, you could do even better. I have asked the school to make sure they get on with plans they have to help you do this. I also think it would help your headteacher if all the teachers have the chance to check on the effect of any changes introduced by the school.

I hope you will always enjoy coming to school.

Yours faithfully

Vivienne McTiffen

Lead Inspector