

Hannah Ball Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110324
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356719
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Nina Bee

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sybil Williams
Headteacher	Maggie Moore
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four teachers. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, children, members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and a small number of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including evidence of internal and external monitoring, academic performance data, and safeguarding documentation. Nineteen questionnaires from parents and carers and nine from staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following key areas:

- the progress made by individuals and different groups of children as they move through Reception and Years 1 and 2
- how effectively teachers' marking and target setting helps children to move forward
- whether provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the school was last inspected.

Information about the school

This is a small infant school. Almost half of the children come from Pakistani backgrounds. Just under a quarter of the children are from White British families. The remainder come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The percentage of children who speak English as an additional language is well above average, as is the percentage who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. The school's future has been unsettled due to local reorganisation. There are now plans for the school to expand to become a one-form entry primary school in September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching, learning and provision overall for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to ensure that they make adequate progress.

Serious weaknesses in teaching and the management of the children in the Reception class affect their learning and behaviour. Planning of activities does not cater for their wide range of abilities and so children are not always sufficiently challenged, especially when they start writing letters, words and numbers. During activities, personal and social skills are not effectively developed. At times, this results in children displaying anti-social behaviour which is not always effectively checked. Adults are not consistently aware of what is happening whilst they interact with individuals or work with small groups. There is no designated leader to oversee the provision in Reception, particularly in relation to health and safety issues, the analysis of data and in measuring the progress children make to identify any underachievement. As a result, although teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, the overall effectiveness of the whole school is inadequate because teaching and learning in Reception is not good enough.

Recently, the school has gone through a difficult time as staff, parents and governors have battled, successfully, for the school to stay open and expand into a primary school. The leadership of the headteacher is strong and she is determined, along with her team, to move the school forward into this exciting new era: morale is high. Staff and members of the governing body are involved in self-evaluation and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They recognise that there is still much work to do in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, successful actions taken to address deficiencies in Years 1 and 2, based on a clear and accurate review of the school's performance, have ensured continuing improvements in pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning in Key Stage 1, and confirm the school's satisfactory capacity for continued improvement. Good links with others, including local nurseries and schools, result in children quickly settling into Reception and transferring smoothly to junior school. Parents are really pleased about this.

Older pupils develop a good awareness of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise because healthy eating has a high profile in the school. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about foods such as vegetables and fruit, which they know are good for them and others that may be nice but contain too much sugar. They clearly know about the importance of drinking water and the need to take regular exercise. Specialist sports

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coaches are invited into school to work with the pupils. Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about learning karate. Pupils sensibly discussed the need to keep themselves safe. They say they feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers will sort out any concerns or worries they may have. The school engages particularly well with parents. Staff make themselves available each morning and afternoon in case any parents or carers have concerns about their children. Parents say they are happy with this arrangement. Pupils have targets to aspire to but these are not promoted effectively either during lessons or when work is marked. Teachers' marking is not successfully focusing on what children need to do to improve and reach their targets.

Attendance is low but over the last year has improved rapidly. However, monitoring procedures are not robust enough to give a detailed picture of the reasons for low attendance. The progress of those who are persistent absentees is affected because they do not attend school regularly. Behaviour is monitored effectively and is good, especially in classes in Years 1 and 2, when all ages eat lunch together, and as pupils move around the school or play in the playground. Generally, pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well as they work and play together. By the time pupils leave Year 2, most reach average levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Along with good personal and social skills, they are soundly prepared for their future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Check that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive good quality provision by:
 - ensuring that all teaching and planning address the wide range of abilities in the Reception class
 - making sure that when children start to write recognisable letters and numbers, they are taught how to write them with the correct formation
 - enabling children who are confident at writing simple words to develop basic sentence construction
 - checking that the management and organisation of all activities enables children to develop good personal and social skills and behave well consistently
 - ensuring that the learning environment and the resources used, both inside and out, are regularly checked to make sure they are safe and conducive to good learning
 - appointing a leader who regularly monitors children's progress and takes action if there is evidence of underachievement.
- Improve the way all teachers mark children's work by:
 - making sure that children receive clear guidance on what they need to do to improve and reach their literacy and numeracy targets.
- Improve attendance by:
 - developing more rigorous systems to monitor attendance
 - working with parents to emphasise that learning is badly affected when their children miss school.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

The current Reception children entered school with expected levels of skills, knowledge and attainment in all areas except communications, language and literacy which were below. Progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. Whilst most children are keen to learn, those in the Reception class do not make as much progress as they could.

Progress is better in Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 attainment for all groups of pupils is broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory in reading, writing, mathematics and science in relation to their starting points in Year 1. School data and inspection evidence show some pupils make good progress in Year 1 because of good teaching. For example, in a literacy lesson learning was good because the teacher modelled writing expertly, reinforcing and developing the pupils' understanding of the correct use of capital letters and full stops. The lesson ran at a brisk pace. Consequently, the pupils listened attentively and were keen to answer questions to demonstrate their good understanding. Pupils got on confidently with their writing activities because these were well matched to their individual needs. There were good relationships throughout. Behaviour was good because the pupils knew what was expected of them. They were polite and listened when others spoke. In satisfactory lessons, behaviour is good but learning is not as good when all pupils are given the same activity. Higher-attaining pupils are then not sufficiently challenged and lower-attaining pupils find the work too difficult.

Most pupils enjoy school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their classmates because they have detailed plans that target the areas to focus on. Those who are learning to speak English as an additional language receive satisfactory support so make steady progress. There is no evidence to indicate that there are any variations in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils, in Year 2, know that the school is made up of pupils and staff who come from a wide range of backgrounds. They talk sensibly about this and know that everyone's background should be respected. Assemblies promote the development of personal and social skills as well as giving children time to reflect on moral issues. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They are proud to help out around the school, especially during assembly. The school council has made a difference to the school community by organising the purchase of animal-shaped refuse bins which encourage pupils to keep the school litter-free. Pupils raise funds for others less fortunate than themselves as well as sharing harvest produce with local people.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons in Key Stage 1 activities are well matched to pupils' needs so they learn well and make good progress. However, where teaching is satisfactory, assessment information is not always used sharply enough to match activities to the needs of all pupils and progress slows. Lessons are soundly resourced to support learning. Learning support assistants contribute satisfactorily to lessons. However, there are occasions when they sit and listen to the teacher working with the whole class and contribute little to learning. In lessons relationships are good, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and are well-behaved.

Effective links with the local community enable the curriculum to be enriched well by visits to exciting places such as Windsor Castle and interesting visitors are invited to talk to and work with the pupils. A good range of extra activities are also planned which pupils enjoy taking part in. Intervention programmes are offered to pupils who need additional support. These allow pupils to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support the mathematics curriculum.

All pupils work through an effective programme that develops basic mathematical skills.

There is good care for vulnerable pupils with specific needs. This enables them to be successfully integrated into classes. Individual plans which identify priorities to focus on are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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Procedures for checking the level of language acquisition for pupils who speak English as an additional language are satisfactory and in the process of further development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff, parents and the governing body are ambitious for the school and excited about extending provision to become a primary school over the next few years. Important systems are well established such as tracking children's progress and developing intervention strategies to support those who find it difficult to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school acknowledges that subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in analysing data for their subjects. There are regular evaluations of teaching and learning in all three classes, which have led to improvements in Years 1 and 2. The headteacher identified weaknesses in teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and arranged for additional support from the local authority. There have been some successes in this area, but all would admit there is still some way to go.

Governance is satisfactory. The school development plan is a well-focused document which clearly identifies what must be achieved and shows that staff and members of the governing body are soundly involved in the work of the school. Aspects of the governors' role have been identified as in need of development, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating the low attendance. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate because, although all pupils are treated fairly and with respect, not all are able to make adequate progress because of inadequacies in teaching in Reception. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and, at the time of the inspection, all statutory requirements were met. The school ensures that procedures for safeguarding are robust and adequately documented. The school promotes community cohesion effectively. Colourful photographs show pupils thoroughly enjoying themselves as they take part in numerous activities which enable them to become more aware of life outside school. Links within the local community are good; for example, good relationships have been established with a contrasting school in the local area. The school has many visitors including people from a range of backgrounds, artists and representatives from different places of worship. These adults talk to and work with the pupils and enable them to become more aware of the wider world. The impact of this work is felt strongly in the school and, as a result, pupils from many different backgrounds work and play well together.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes are inadequate because there are major weaknesses in teaching and, as a result, learning is inadequate. Personal and social skills are not satisfactorily developed and this affects behaviour, particularly sitting attentively and listening carefully. Occasionally health and safety issues are not effectively addressed, for example when children are allowed to run about in the classroom. In addition, adults do not always have an overview of the whole class when they focus on individuals and small groups of children. They miss important incidents which need addressing such as arguments or unsafe use of resources. Children are, too often, allowed to speak whilst adults are talking and the need to develop concentration skills is not endorsed effectively. All these factors impede learning. The management and organisation of activities have weaknesses because planning does not consistently cater for the different abilities within the class and so not all children are sufficiently challenged. Children have satisfactory opportunities to write but few take these up because writing areas are not interesting and exciting places to work. When children start to write recognisable letters and numbers, they are not given clear enough guidance on how to form them correctly. When higher-attaining children begin to write words and simple sentences, the idea of using a capital letter to start and a full stop to finish is not effectively taught. Leadership and management are inadequate. Progress is tracked in all areas of learning but there is no-one overseeing the provision to ensure that data are analysed so that all children do their best and underachievement is eliminated.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the work of the school and the efforts of the staff. A small minority of parents feel that they are not adequately informed about their children's progress. This was followed up during the inspection and evidence shows that parents have good opportunities to speak to staff if they have any concerns about their child's progress. A small group of parents also felt that the school did not listen to their concerns and suggestions. Inspection evidence shows that the current menu at lunch time and the system for paying is a result of seeking the views of parents and carers. This works well and lunchtime in school has a sociable atmosphere, where children sit and eat and happily chat whilst being well supported by adults.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hannah Ball Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	58	6	32	2	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	68	4	21	1	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	37	8	42	3	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	42	9	47	2	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	42	10	53	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	47	7	37	2	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	47	8	42	1	5	1	5
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	37	8	42	2	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	47	8	42	0	0	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	63	5	26	2	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	37	9	47	2	11	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	9	47	7	37	1	5	2	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	42	9	47	0	0	2	11

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hannah Ball Infant School, High Wycombe HP13 7JS

Thank you for helping us when we came to visit you a few weeks ago. We were impressed by how well you all get on with each other and how well you behave. It was lovely to see so many smiling faces as you sang so beautifully in assembly. We know that most of you enjoy school and the many extra activities that are offered to you, especially karate, because you told us so. The way you are looked after is satisfactory. So is the way the school is led and managed. Whilst most of you are keen to learn, children in the Reception class do not make as much progress as they could. Progress is better in Years 1 and 2.

We have asked the school to improve the education you receive by:

- making sure that the teaching, curriculum, care and leadership in Reception are of good quality and children's progress is checked regularly so that all children get off to a good start and achieve well
- improving the way teachers mark your work so that you know what you have to do to improve and reach your targets
- ensuring that more of you attend school every day.

We judged that currently your school is not performing as well as it should in Reception, but staff are working hard to improve the situation. That is why we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will come again soon to check that things are getting better. You can all help by attending regularly and always trying hard with your work.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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