

Field House Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112574
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357133
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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 of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bridget Jones
Headteacher	Denise Wells
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 12 lessons, spoke with parents and carers and held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation, attendance records, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation and planning, as well as responses to questionnaires from 81 parents and carers and 20 staff.

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

- Are teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress accurate and reliable, and how good is pupils' progress?
- Does the school now provide more opportunities for pupils to develop independent thinking and problem-solving skills?
- Has the quality of the school's self-evaluation and monitoring improved?

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to the average primary school. Approximately one in five pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The school holds the Activemark award in recognition of its work to promote physical fitness.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school is a welcoming and well-ordered community. When they join the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's knowledge and skills are broadly in line with national expectations for their age in all areas of learning, although they are weaker in communication, language and literacy than in other areas. By the end of Year 2 their attainment is still broadly in line with national averages in core subjects. More pupils reach National Curriculum level 3 in reading and mathematics than in writing.

In the majority of lessons observed, teaching and learning were good, and pupils made secure progress during the individual lessons. However, when they mark pupils' work, teachers do not always show pupils clearly enough the next steps they need to take to improve, and pupils are not always clear how a lesson builds on what has gone before. This slows their long-term progress. Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that it needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills across a range of subjects, not just in literacy.

The school is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The promotion of pupils' self-confidence and the raising of their aspirations and confidence are at the heart of all it does. Teachers take great care to ensure that no-one is excluded from anything the school has to offer. This aspect is reviewed rigorously. When, for example, monitoring showed that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were not achieving as well as others, concerted action was taken. As a result, this sizeable group of pupils now reaches standards in line with those of their peers.

Pupils' outstanding behaviour makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of learning. In lessons and around the school they interact with one another and with adults politely and with courtesy. Expectations are high and pupils understand the school's routines well. This has enabled pupils who have had difficulties in other schools to settle down and make progress.

Pupils readily take on responsibility and make a good contribution within the school as well as to their local community, but opportunities for them to have direct interaction with children or adults from communities further afield and to appreciate first-hand how other people live are limited.

The school has effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, the school's self-evaluation is now realistic and accurate. Opportunities to develop thinking and problem solving skills are now well embedded into lessons, and the school has improved its monitoring of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it has a clearer view of their progress. A focus on improving reading has raised boys' and girls' attainment in reading. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English in Key Stage 1 by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to develop writing skills across a range of subjects
 - providing greater challenge to pupils so that more of them securely reach National Curriculum level 3 in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that pupils' long-term progress matches the good progress seen in lessons by
 - securing greater consistency in the quality of feedback which teachers give to pupils
 - making sure that when teachers mark pupils' work they make very clear to them the next steps they need to take to improve their learning.
- Strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to interact directly with people from other communities, including communities abroad.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In recent years pupils' attainment in mathematics has been consistently higher than in other core subjects, and in writing it has been lower, although standards in neither of these differ significantly from standards attained nationally. Standards in reading are also in line with national averages.

In lessons inspectors saw some good progress, and some work of above-average standards. Pupils responded well to 'hands-on' tasks which kept them busy and deeply engaged. Their excellent behaviour made a positive contribution to learning, and they responded well to opportunities to discuss answers or to work in groups. Games and competitions made lessons lively and fun. In one literacy lesson, for example, groups were very keen to score points in a spelling activity in which they enjoyed looking for key letters in jumbled piles of cards. However, long-term progress is slower because teachers' marking often gives only praise for what is done well rather than providing pupils with a clear indication of how to improve their work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well to the care and support they receive, and thus they make similar progress to other pupils. Boys and girls work well together, and their progress is in line with each other.

Pupils very readily told inspectors how they feel safe. They understand about 'stranger danger' and road safety. They explain clearly how they stay fit and healthy through exercise, and eat the kinds of food which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They are happy to serve their school as monitors, playground buddies, or members of the school council, and they play their part in the local community in events such as the local festival where they have been proud to perform dances on stage.

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They are thoughtful and sensitive when given opportunities to reflect, in assembly for example. They respond with interest and curiosity when they learn about people whose customs and beliefs are different from their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
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?

Inspectors observed some good and some satisfactory teaching and learning. Where teaching was good, teachers matched tasks well to pupils' capabilities. Teaching assistants were active in giving support and challenge to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils were busy and attentive. Where teaching was only satisfactory, pupils sometimes stayed on one task for too long when they had already mastered it and did not need further practice, or they were given tasks without enough guidance on how to complete them successfully. At all times excellent behaviour made a strong contribution to the harmony and smooth running of lessons.

The well-balanced curriculum incorporates opportunities for pupils to develop core skills, including information and communications technology, across a range of subjects. However, opportunities for them to practise writing skills across subjects are not provided as often as are those for them to practise reading and mathematics. The range of enrichment activities is good. Pupils take part in sports, concerts, and community events such as the Ilkeston Festival. They respond very well to special events such as a Chinese

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cooking demonstration or visits from the police, the fire service, 'Bollywood' dancers and Zulu warriors. They also enjoy visits for example to the theatre, museums, and a farm.

Care, guidance and support are strong. Pupils are helped to settle in well, when they first join the school. There are strong links with the receiving junior school, such as a one-to-one buddy scheme with Year 3 pupils, so that pupils feel confident about moving to their next school. The school can provide striking examples of the support it has given to pupils and families in challenging circumstances, to ensure that no-one 'slips through the net'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have a realistic knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There has been steady improvement in areas identified at the last inspection, as well as in areas identified by the school's own monitoring. However, long-term progress is satisfactory and attainment has remained broadly average, particularly in writing, so inspectors judge the school's effectiveness in embedding ambition and driving improvement to be satisfactory.

Staff work very well as a cohesive team. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are conscientiously monitored by the headteacher through lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff draw up plans for improvement based on issues raised through this monitoring. They work very enthusiastically, and support and challenge one another well to bring about improvements for the benefit of the pupils. For example, they identified pupils' reading skills as in need of more vigorous development. Teachers found more opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across subjects and, as a result, attainment in reading now equals attainment in mathematics.

Governors bring a range of skills and experience to their work. The governing body offers challenge as well as support to help shape the strategic direction of the school. However, this has not focused sharply on how the school can improve. The school provides a good level of information to parents and carers and gives them information about how they can support their child. The school draws on a wide range of partners to enhance its provision. For example, teachers work with other schools to confirm the accuracy of their assessment of pupils, pupils enjoy sporting and other events with pupils from other schools, and a wide range of partners help to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

In promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination teachers monitor the school's work rigorously to ensure that all pupils can benefit from what the school

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provides. They provide an excellent balance of compassion and challenge to ensure that pupils thrive in their personal development and engage well with their learning.

At the time of the inspection all statutory requirements for the safeguarding of children were met. The school's record-keeping and monitoring are conscientious, and, where monitoring reveals the need for improvements, these are addressed swiftly.

The school has a sound understanding of its own context and its contribution to community cohesion locally, although no formal audit has taken place. Opportunities for the school to promote community cohesion further afield by enabling pupils to interact directly with adults or children from communities further afield, however, such as a link with a school overseas, are not yet developed.

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	2
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children arrive with knowledge and skills that are in line with those expected for their age, although their communication and language skills are below that level. They make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception year all areas except writing are in line with age-related expectations. Writing remains very slightly below them. Children learn to keep themselves healthy and safe, and their behaviour is good. They are given responsibility and are happy to take on jobs such as tidying up.

Children are quickly helped to settle into routines. They confidently leave their parents and carers and clearly enjoy being at school. The accommodation is stimulating and well resourced, although opportunities for children to develop reading and writing skills are not as good in the outdoor area as they are indoors. Children develop their physical skills well, and they use computers confidently in their learning. Staff provide a good balance

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between teacher-led activities and child-initiated activities. The latter help children develop independence and confidence.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear overview of strengths and areas for improvement. Changes to the way in which children are assessed and improvements to the tracking processes have meant that staff now have a much clearer view of the progress of each child. Teachers and other adults regularly observe and record children's learning, both formally and informally.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaires show very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. Parents and carers particularly like the way it keeps their children safe.

A very small minority of parents and carers did not indicate whether they feel the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors looked at this area very closely and found that pupils' outstanding behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning and personal development.

Some parents and carers added comment of their own, most of them glowing with praise for the school. Typical of many was the following: "My children have always skipped happily to school. Everyone here has always gone the extra mile. The headteacher is one in a million".

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Field House 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	79	14	17	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	80	16	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	60	31	38	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	65	26	32	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	73	21	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	63	27	33	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	68	25	31	0	0	0	0
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)	53	65	25	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	62	28	35	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	54	29	36	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	46	39	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	74	19	23	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	78	17	21	1	1	0	0

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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Field House Infant School, Ilkeston, DE7 4LT

I'd like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone for the lovely warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We came to find out what your school does well and how it might be improved. This is what we found.

You behave extremely well at school and this helps you to learn. The standard of your work is equal in standard to the work of children in other schools.

Your teachers look after you very well and make sure that everyone feels safe. They are very careful to make sure that no-one misses out on anything the school has to offer.

Your parents and carers are pleased with your school.

You enjoy lots of visits and other out-of-school activities, and you enjoy welcoming visitors when they come in to talk to you or show you things.

We have suggested to your teachers that they should aim for you to reach higher standards, particularly in writing. We would also like them to help you understand better what you need to do to improve your work. We have asked your school to give you more opportunities to meet children and adults from other parts of Britain and abroad, so that you can get to know them and learn from each other.

It was really good to visit your school. You can all play your part in improving it by continuing to behave well and always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

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