

Nascot Wood Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117374
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	363870
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Basit
Headteacher	Pam Scragg
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2008
School address	Nascot Wood Road Watford WD17 4YT
Telephone number	01923 239653
Fax number	01923 239100
Email address	head@nascotwoodinfants.herts.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed seven teachers in 20 lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices and the school's self-evaluation and development planning. They also considered the questionnaire responses from 86 parents and carers and 59 pupils.

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

- Does the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or at an early stage of English acquisition match that of other groups in the school?
- To what degree does teaching and assessment practice ensure that pupils make at least good and very often exceptional progress?
- How well does the school's care and learning support provision contribute to pupils' progress and development?
- How effective have the senior leadership, governing body and staff been in sustaining the momentum for school improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant and nursery school. Approximately half of the pupils are of White British heritage. The rest come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language, although few are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but an average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The school has the Sports Activemark and Artsmark awards and has Healthy School status.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school, highly regarded by parents and carers as an inclusive and supportive community school where pupils of all abilities and learning needs are able to succeed exceptionally well.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress accelerates in Year 1, and by the end of Year 2 pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Outstanding learning support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make excellent progress.

Parents and carers praise the inclusive and supportive nature of the school. Pupils agree that it keeps them very safe, enables them to have very healthy lifestyles and ensures learning is successful and enjoyable. Attendance is high and behaviour particularly good in the way pupils work with and support each other. Pupils demonstrate considerable maturity for their age and are very keen to take on a wide range of roles around school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong, reflecting the emphasis placed on developing the whole child. Pupils appreciate opportunities to discuss and reflect on personal values and beliefs, show exceptional understanding of, and consideration for, other pupils with particular needs, and work very well together in what is a culturally diverse school community.

Senior leaders give considerable attention to the support and training of all staff. As a result they have succeeded in sustaining high outcomes despite some new and less experienced staff joining the school. All staff, including the well-trained learning support assistants, work as a cohesive team in providing a topic-based curriculum that very successfully engages and involves pupils in their learning. A programme to develop pupils' thinking skills is used well across the school. Lessons are purposeful and well paced. Teachers are very good at explaining to pupils what they expect them to learn, and succeed in doing, by the end of the lesson. Most teachers achieve an effective balance between whole-class presentation and individual and group work with varying challenge. However, in some lessons pupils spend too long listening to the teacher, so reducing the amount of time available for otherwise well-planned learning activities. All teachers provide opportunities in lessons for pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and indicate when they need extra help. Teachers also make excellent use of the school's marking procedures to show pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. The school is very successful in its care and support of all pupils, including those with challenging learning needs, thanks to the considerable in-class learning support and very effective working relationships with a range of external agencies.

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The school is led and managed very well by the experienced headteacher, who is well supported by the staff. Staff morale is high. The enthusiastic governing body is actively involved in the life of the school and participates fully in monitoring and evaluating school practice. It shares with the senior leaders a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and what to address in order to further improve. For example enhancing provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making full use of the recently improved outdoor area and sharpening the use of assessment information. The school responded well to the last inspection report by establishing very effective procedures to monitor and support pupils' progress, especially for those who speak English as an additional language. Outstanding outcomes and the quality of provision have been sustained and in some cases strengthened, demonstrating an outstanding capacity for further improvement, underpinned by very effective self-evaluation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high by:
 - avoiding long periods of whole-class teaching which reduces the amount of lesson time for more targeted learning and support.
- Make provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage outstanding by:
 - maximising the use of the outside area through freer movement of children between inside and outside learning activities
 - ensuring assessment is more evaluative when observing children's progress in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils join the effective Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, and develop well across all areas including aspects of literacy and numeracy. Progress over Years 1 and 2 has been consistently good or better, with pupils attaining standards that are well above local and national averages. The proportion of Year 2 pupils who reach the higher National Curriculum level 3 in both writing and mathematics is approximately three times the national average. This was most evident in a Year 2 English lesson where pupils were using persuasive language confidently in producing a promotional leaflet and demonstrating an understanding of connectives, superlatives and simile. A Year 1 science lesson also demonstrated very strong teaching and support and consequently outstanding progress as pupils used the nearby woodland to investigate 'mini-beasts'. They demonstrated good concentration and effective investigative and evaluation skills. There is very little difference in outcomes between boys and girls or between pupils of different backgrounds. All make at least good progress. However, those pupils who come to the school with lower developmental or language starting points make exceptional progress because of the outstanding school support. This was evident in a numeracy lesson where a pupil with significant behavioural difficulties was able to make very good progress thanks to carefully prepared learning support which made it possible for him to access the main class activities and work within the whole class group. Very strong support also enables pupils at an early stage of learning English to quickly acquire language skills so they match and often exceed the rates of progress of their classmates.

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Pupils are very committed to a healthy lifestyle. Almost all walk to school. All the older pupils participate in after-school sports and, through the work of the school council, enthusiastically promote healthy eating and lifestyles. Pupils are very proud of their school and are working with local businesses to create a wildlife garden. The school council takes on considerable responsibilities in managing its finances, deciding playground equipment, interviewing new staff and supporting various charities, including one funding an orphanage in Bangalore.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Pupils and their parents and carers praise the inclusiveness of the school and the quality of the teaching and support. All classes have a teacher and at least one learning support assistant, and often two. Teachers and support staff have established very positive relationships with pupils and have well-developed classroom management skills. Interactive whiteboards and other resources are used well to make learning relevant and fun. The best teaching is challenging and accessible to all pupils because of well-planned resources, effective use of support staff and carefully planned learning steps. A few lessons have introductions to the whole class that are too long, and a few teachers are still improving their questioning skills to encourage greater pupil thinking and participation. Teachers' marking is very strong in giving pupils positive encouragement and helping them to improve their work.

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Teachers and other staff work hard to make the curriculum creative and exciting by organising learning around topics that interest and challenge pupils. There is much evidence of high quality artwork and different creative activities around the school which has been recognised in the school gaining the Artsmark Silver Award. Curriculum weeks and themed days feature strongly and overall provision is enhanced by a wide variety of visits, including those to a butterfly farm, specialist music and dance teaching and sports coaching, as well as guest speakers including an Olympic athlete. Strong personal values are developed through assemblies and personal and social education that enables pupils to develop empathy and respect for the views and beliefs of others. Much of this supports the school's outstanding care, guidance and support in an inclusive and supportive school. The impact of the school's work is evident in the significant gains in the personal and social development, positive attitudes to learning, high attendance and outstanding achievement of all groups of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff and the governing body have accurately judged the quality of teaching and learning to be good rather than outstanding while a few newer teachers establish themselves. There are well-developed systems of lesson observation and staff development and shared procedures for lesson planning and assessment. All staff share an outstanding commitment to equal opportunities. A holistic approach to pupils' development and careful tracking of their progress reflect the headteacher's personal philosophy which is firmly embedded in the inclusive school ethos. The extensive links with the wide range of social care agencies and other support partners contribute to the successful provision in the school. The school successfully engages parents and carers, who see the school and the adjoining junior school as providing the active heart of the local community in that part of Watford. The positive response in the parental questionnaire, high participation in parents' evenings, regular parent forums, family learning courses and other meetings, all indicate this strength in what is a heavily oversubscribed school.

Safeguarding arrangements are very secure and carefully monitored. All legal requirements are met, and all necessary training is up-to-date. The governing body is very well informed about child protection and the work of the school in supporting pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It is rigorous in its checks on risk assessment and always looking at ways of reducing risk, for example through its plans to construct different and even safer access from the school site to the adjoining field and woodland. The school has a clear community cohesion action plan which is regularly reviewed and

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includes the local community as well as wider British and international links. It is an outward looking school that promotes pupils' understanding of the wider world through a curriculum that celebrates the cultural diversity of its own school population, wider links with different faiths and cultural groups in the community, and developing international links including those with India.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good Early Years Foundation Stage provision, including effective additional support for those with limited language skills, ensures that children make good progress across all areas of development. Consequently, attainment is above average when children enter Year 1. This good progress is made possible through learning opportunities that engage children's interest, cover all areas of learning and foster their growing independence. The school provides a caring and supportive environment with good quality resources that are easily accessed by children. There has been considerable improvement in the outdoor area to provide a good range of learning activities. These give a good balance between adult-led work and opportunities for children to explore for themselves. At certain times 'free flow' between inside and outside areas is limited and child-initiated play lacks prompts and challenges from staff to maximise the benefit. However, the adult-led activities are well planned and ensure that children enjoy their learning. The skilled teachers, nursery nurses and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all the children, including those requiring extra learning and language support. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well run and this has been recognised in the provision gaining the local authority quality standard. All safeguarding procedures are very well met and children know how to stay safe and keep healthy. Staff work well together to ensure coverage of all areas of learning, and children's development is assessed regularly and recorded in their 'learning journeys'. These provide detailed and attractive records of what children have achieved and the school is

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developing them further to include more detailed evidence in terms of the areas of learning and indications of how children's knowledge and skills can be improved. Good contact is made with parents and carers through home visits and meetings, and opportunities for daily contact with staff.

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

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about the school and over a quarter took the time to write comments praising the headteacher's leadership, the high standard of teaching and support, and the school's caring environment. The following comments are typical. 'The headteacher is one every school should be blessed with. Her door is never closed and she takes time to know every pupil and their needs.' 'I have been amazed and delighted by how caring and supportive the school has been to my children with special needs. The other pupils treat them with such great kindness and understanding which is an excellent testament to what is undoubtedly a very nurturing and compassionate school.' 'The school has given my (Year 2) child an exceptional start to her education as well as nurturing her socially and emotionally. All the staff in the school, from the head to the dinner ladies, have been instrumental in this.'

A small number of responses showed concern about pupils' progress and how well the school responds to parental concerns. These contrasted sharply with the views of most parents and carers and the inspection team, who found the headteacher and staff highly responsive to parental concerns in a school where pupils' achievement is outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nascot Wood Infant and Nursery 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	81	16	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	79	18	21	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	55	35	41	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	53	36	42	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	60	70	24	28	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	59	30	35	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	63	30	35	2	2	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)	51	59	31	36	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	51	37	43	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	48	38	44	4	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	51	33	38	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	73	20	23	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	74	21	25	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nascot Wood Infant and Nursery School, Watford, WD17 4YT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school gives you an outstanding education, and ensures that you achieve very well by the time you leave.

Your parents and carers greatly appreciate how welcoming the school is and you told us that it is a very safe place to be. The school provides excellent support for those of you who have particular learning needs, as well as others learning English as an additional language. We could see that many of you come from different religious and cultural backgrounds and were impressed with how quickly you all settle and play an active part in school life. You are very well behaved and help each other in lessons. You told us how much you like to be given responsibility and have a voice in school matters through the school council; deciding which playground equipment to buy, choosing which charities to support and even interviewing new staff. Most of you are very committed to healthy eating and are involved in different sports and physical activities including tennis.

Your parents and carers know that teachers and support staff work hard to make lessons interesting, which is perhaps why you all say you like school and now have very good attendance. We were impressed that teachers always explain the purpose of a lesson and at the end, ask you to say if you understand a topic or not so they can help you. Teachers' marking is very helpful in showing you how well you have done and how you can improve. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well but sometimes the sessions on the mat, listening to the teacher, go on too long. We have asked them to allow more lesson time for you to work independently or in groups with the teacher and learning support assistants. We also looked at the Nursery and Reception classes and could see that children were making good progress. To help those children learn a little better we have asked the school to improve the outside learning activities and the way staff assess children's progress.

The headteacher, the governing body and all the staff are working hard to maintain an excellent school. You can help by maintaining your high attendance, working hard in lessons and taking an active part in school affairs.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead inspector

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