



# Diamond Hall Infant School and Nursery Unit

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108760  
**LEA** Sunderland  
**Inspection number** 278042  
**Inspection dates** 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Margaret Shepherd

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Well Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Millfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5537620
<b>Number on roll</b>	291	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5537622
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Ann Pickering
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sally Collingwood

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5 December 2005 - 6 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278042
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Diamond Hall Infant and Nursery School has three classes in each infant age group. The nursery provides 52 part-time places. Nearly half of the reception children enter the nursery from a neighbouring nursery school. Standards on entry to the nursery and reception are below expectations. The catchment area of the school is changing considerably. The proportion of children with English as an additional language is increasing in number and whereas there was one major group ethnic group, there are now eleven. The nature of the housing has also changed from owner-occupied to rented. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of looked after children.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. This matches the school's own view. Achievement is consistently good through the school and outstanding in writing, speaking and listening. Children enter the school with standards below average. They leave with standards at the expected level overall and above average standards in writing, speaking and listening. Personal development and well-being are good overall. Behaviour, attitudes, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Rates of attendance are below average despite the school's considerable efforts to improve them. Teaching is good, with outstanding features in the teaching of writing, speaking and listening. The curriculum, care, guidance and welfare are excellent. The provision and standards in reception and nursery are good. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is an excellent leader and manager. She works extremely well with her high quality deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. Levels of inclusion are excellent. Provision for children with English as an additional language is excellent. Accommodation is good overall but outdoor learning for reception is inadequate. The school provides good value for money. It has worked hard to improve the issues from the previous inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase rates of attendance in order to provide a more continuous learning experience for pupils.
- Implement the plans to raise standards in reading and mathematics to match the standards in writing, speaking and listening.
- Extend the accommodation for outdoor learning for reception children.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are at the expected level and children's achievement is consistently good through the school. Children enter the school with standards below average and leave it with standards that are average overall, which represents good progress. Standards in the Year 2 national tests fell last year. Six children left Year 2 who were due to achieve well in the tests and seven children joined Year 2 with no spoken English skills at all. Standards this year have returned to average levels overall, and more children are reaching the expected level in writing than average. Year 2 children write confidently across a range of different genres. They produce well-sequenced stories, with interesting use of vocabulary. For example, a child wrote about a monster, 'If you see him, don't be scared of his orange sharp pointy teeth.' Standards in speaking and listening are also higher than expected. Children listen very well in group and whole class sessions. They speak confidently in a range of different contexts. The school sets itself challenging targets and strives to reach them.

Children with English as an additional language make very good progress. The school's records show that this is consistent across reading, writing and mathematics. Children with learning disabilities and looked after children achieve very well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. Children approach learning extremely positively. They have very high levels of co-operation and approach independent tasks very responsibly. Behaviour is outstanding. Children express opinions confidently and are very considerate to each other. All children have a very good understanding about issues such as bullying. The trail of each child's hands around the school is a powerful example of every individual's contribution to this work.

Children have a very good understanding of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They enthusiastically outline the importance of a healthy diet and appreciate the fruit that is provided. Older children have a good sense of community through their 'buddying' of younger children. Children respond very well to the many opportunities to work in teams and this contributes very well to their future economic well-being.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children's responses during time to reflect, such as assemblies, are outstanding. They express awe and wonder at key moments and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The strong emphasis on honouring the culture of the many different ethnic groups in the school extends children's understanding of cultural issues extremely well.

Attendance levels are inadequate. The school is working very hard to improve this and children are keen to take part in the different projects such as Every School Day Counts. The school is not complacent about this issue and is continuing to extend its systems to address this weakness.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features. This matches the school's own judgement. Teachers organise lessons well, with a good balance between whole class sessions, group and individual tasks. They provide a very good range of independent activities which require co-operation to complete them. This results in very effective development of personal skills. For example, reception children confidently explored surprise boxes of treasures with each other based on the Snowman story. Teachers manage behaviour extremely well through sensitive interaction with individuals and clear reinforcement of school rules. Teachers plan interesting tasks for the outdoor learning in reception but the lack of direct outdoor facilities for reception reduces the range of learning that can take place.

Partnership between the teachers and teaching assistants is excellent. All staff have an extremely clear understanding of the key learning for each lesson and they use questioning skilfully to support individuals and groups. The teaching of writing is excellent. Teachers provide children with very clear targets for their learning and provide extremely interesting stimulation for writing. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed making "Wild Thing" monsters from a range of fruit and vegetables and then wrote instructions of how they had carried this out. Teachers ensure that children are fully included in lessons by spreading their questions systematically across different individuals. They use a partnership system in whole class sessions extremely effectively and children learn to speak and listen carefully to each other.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The school only judged this aspect as good. The school is extremely thorough in its termly planning. Staff work very hard to provide a carefully balanced programme of work over time, with a high emphasis on personal development. This is having a very positive impact on children's attitudes to learning. There is a very high level of planning between the teachers within each age group, which ensures that children receive parallel experiences in each class. The provision of role play areas Role play areas are set up to allow children to develop their imaginative learning through a social context such as a post office or a stable. throughout the school is excellent and develops children's writing, speaking and listening extremely well. Teachers create extremely effective links across different subjects through a common theme, which promotes children's learning very well. The whole school curriculum theme weeks are excellent. The school selects topics for these weeks extremely carefully to match the children's needs, such as the One World Week, which was based on the nationalities of the children with English as an additional language. Staff use visits out of school extremely effectively to capture children's imagination and develop basic skills, such as the trip to a Newcastle city centre to view the Christmas Snowman displays. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and now it is a strength.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of the care, guidance and welfare is outstanding. The school was cautious about their own judgement, which was good. The school sets a high priority on care and welfare of children and parents appreciate this provision. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure children's health and safety. Staff know individuals very well and work closely together to support individuals. Arrangements to support vulnerable children are outstanding. The school has many different highly productive partnerships with outside experts to support individuals, particularly children with English as an additional language. Children receive extremely clear guidance of how to improve their work, which promotes their learning very well. For example, reception

children knew precisely that they had to think about what they wanted to write and then tell an adult.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall. This matches the school's own judgement. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the work of the school. She is quietly determined to continuously improve the school's provision. She initiates priorities systematically to raise standards, such as the whole school writing initiative. She ensures that there are high quality systems in place through the school to evaluate and develop the school's work. Her monitoring and evaluation systems are excellent. They are detailed and thorough and involve staff at every level. She works closely with the high quality deputy headteacher and they share the same vision. The senior leadership team work very well together. They lead their age group teams or subjects very effectively and ensure that new initiatives are implemented consistently through the school.

The leadership and management of the governors are good. The chair has an extremely good understanding of the work of the school through her long service on the governing body and her monitoring of standards. The vice-chair also has considerable expertise that he uses to evaluate the provision for children with English as an additional language. There have been several recent changes in the governing body and these new governors are still learning about their responsibilities.

The school considers budgetary planning carefully, with a priority in sustaining single age group classes and ensuring good quality teaching teams. Although there was a financial surplus that was higher than the recommended level last year, there were key spending commitments that reduced this level in the current budget. Accommodation is good overall but there is no direct access for outdoor learning for reception children. The school provides good value for money. It has worked hard to carry out the improvement issues from the previous inspection. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning was a weakness and it is now a strength. The school values the views of parents and children and takes action on their suggestions. Parents really appreciate the school's provision. Self-evaluation is good overall, but the school tends to be too modest about identifying its strengths. There is a good capacity to succeed in future due to the leadership of the headteacher and governors and the positive attitudes and support that they receive from the staff.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Diamond Hall Infant School and Nursery Unit

Well Street

Millfield

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 6JF

7 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

The best things about your school are:

the quality of your work and the good progress that you make as you move through the school

the very good writing that you do and the way that you speak so confidently and listen so carefully

the excellent way that you try so hard to do your best in lessons

the way that those of you who speak English as well as your own language work so hard and get such good results

your outstanding behaviour in your teaching areas, in assemblies, around the school, at lunchtime and at playtimes

the sensitive way you respond to special times in assemblies and the way that you work so well together in teams

all the different things that you know about each other's different cultures

your good teachers, who work so well with all the other adults in your lessons

the exciting things that you cover in your curriculum and the whole school themes that you do each term

the way that the adults in the school look after you so well and help you understand what you need to do to improve

your wonderful headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors.

One of the things that we have asked your school to do to improve is to get all the children to come to school every day. Another thing is to help you to do as well in reading and mathematics as you do in writing, speaking and listening. The final thing is to build an area outside of reception for you to learn in during the day.

Best wishes

Maggi Shepherd, Gillian Doran Smith, Michael Reeves

Lead inspector and team inspectors