



# Hawthorn Park Lower School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 109524  
**LEA** BEDFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278214  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Parkside Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		LU5 5QN
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 10		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 863859
<b>Number on roll</b>	240	<b>Fax number</b>	01582 863859
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Angie Murdoch
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Lindsey Keen-Haudin

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3 to 10	12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	278214

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools and two Additional Inspectors, over a two day period in the autumn term 2005.

## **Description of the school**

Hawthorn Park Lower School serves the Parkside estate in Houghton Regis. It is a large school. The percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are above the national average. Fourteen per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, and only two are in the early stages of learning English. A high proportion of pupils enter school with language, social and communication skills that are significantly lower than the national average. The school places the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) at the centre of its provision. The school has strong links with parents and the local community, offering a range of facilities. These include an extended school bid in order to increase social care, links to the Chiltern Learning Community and collaboration with other schools in the area. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark three times, The Healthy Schools Award and the PE Silver Active mark.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The inspectors and the headteacher agree that Hawthorn Park Lower School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has many strengths and no aspect of its work is inadequate. Parents are very happy with all that is done for their children. When children start school, many of them find it hard to listen and to speak clearly. By the time they leave, when they are aged 9, most of them are doing as well as other children of their age. The youngest children get off to a very good start in the nursery and reception class, where the good provision ensures that the children settle quickly and achieve well. They achieve average results in the tests for 7 year olds, and make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. Progress in writing and mathematics is not as good as in reading. Although teaching is satisfactory, not all lessons are interesting or exciting enough or use different methods to capture the full attention of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the high level of care and support they are given. The school is well led by the headteacher who is helped by knowledgeable and hard-working governors. The senior management team have an accurate understanding of what needs to be improved and have effective plans to do this, which they are putting into practice. They have made excellent partnership links with a variety of organisations to improve services for both pupils and parents. The school makes an enormous effort to reach out to parents and the local community. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and taking part in the many activities and clubs provided for them. The school includes all pupils well in everything it provides. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

In order to get even better the school should: - Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by making lessons more stimulating and exciting - Improve pupils' writing skills by giving more opportunities for them to think and talk about their ideas before they try to write them down through role play, discussion and work in pairs and groups - Improve problem solving skills in mathematics by providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss their answers and working out

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children begin school with low levels of skills and knowledge. They get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes and, due to good quality teaching, they are currently achieving very well in all areas of their learning and personal development. Progress in the rest of the school is satisfactory. The school makes effective use of its knowledge of how well pupils are doing to ensure they make steady progress and to set them generally challenging targets which they meet. Standards have been rising over recent years because of the school's consistent focus on improving basic skills such as reading and writing. The results in national tests in 2004 were below average. This year's provisional results are better, and are now typical of pupils aged 7 in

mathematics and writing and even better than this in reading. Pupils get good practice in reading every morning and helpers from outside the school come in and listen to them read regularly. Pupils are keen to get on and they are developing the ability to work on their own. They still have difficulty in expressing their own ideas clearly and in writing them down. The school is particularly good at assessing the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Their needs are pinpointed well and the progress of these pupils is good. More able pupils could be helped to do even better. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as, and in many cases better than, other pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school works hard at raising the self-esteem of its pupils and it is successful in this. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has risen to the national average. They behave well most of the time because they are keen to please and have good relationships with all the staff, such as the site manager who plays games with pupils during the breakfast club. Any challenging behaviour which occurs due to pupils' emotional or learning difficulties is managed well to minimise disruption to other children. Pupils are proud of what they do in school and look smart in their uniform. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good. They learn to consider the needs of others, raising funds for local and world-wide charities and being involved in local projects such as developing a piece of waste ground into a wildlife area. They learn about different cultures in lessons as well as through visits and visitors to the school. The school council helps pupils to play an active part in making decisions, and they take on other responsibilities around the school. For example, children in the nursery have jobs to do each day: clearing away after their snacks, washing plates and tidying away what they have used. Pupils learn what to do to stay safe and they understand how healthy food and exercise are important. The focus on basic skills helps to prepare children well for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress. Teaching for the youngest children is exciting because teachers constantly question children, encourage them to talk using full sentences and provide them with lots of stimulation. For example, children played with blocks of ice and stone and created a landscape complete with polar bears. They were then encouraged to discuss how cold it would be and how the ice might melt in their hands. In the rest of the school, teachers do not always provide such an interesting range of stimulating experiences. Teachers often do most of the talking, and they do not consistently encourage pupils to discuss their ideas before they try and write about them or explain their working out in mathematics. Teachers mark children's work regularly but they

do not always tell them what they need to do in order to improve their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties get a good level of support from knowledgeable teaching assistants. More able pupils are not always set work that challenges them enough and so they do not always make fast enough progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils by concentrating on reading, writing mathematics and ICT. All legal requirements are met. Children starting school have a good range of interesting activities. The school works hard to provide pupils with experiences they might not otherwise have. There is an impressive range of activities for pupils to participate in, outside of lessons. These include competitive and fun sports and opportunities to learn musical instruments. All this encourages pupils to lead an active and healthy life. Pupils visit museums, the theatre and other local places of interest. These visits are well planned and enrich their education. Local members of the community visit the school to talk about various aspects of their work. For example, the Life Bus visits the school and pupils enjoy learning about how to look after themselves. Despite recent improvements, there are still not enough planned opportunities for computers and other forms of technology to be regularly used in lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents and carers feel that the school cares for and supports their children well. The school has a deep commitment to all its pupils including those who find learning difficult. Child protection arrangements are clear and pupils who are at risk or vulnerable for whatever reason are quickly identified and supported effectively. The school works very successfully with outside agencies such as the speech and language unit, education psychologist and 'Family Friends' to help these pupils and their families. Pupils and parents know that their concerns will be listened to by all staff. The personal development of all pupils is regularly assessed and pupils needing support are identified and supported well. The feedback pupils receive on their written work does not always help them know what they have to do to improve. Some pupils have individual targets to work towards and are aware of how to achieve success, but this does not happen in all classes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well. She promotes a caring and supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, including more support for pupils with learning difficulties. The use of computers has increased, although these still need to be used more consistently in lessons. The senior teachers

do their jobs effectively and the team is developing its ability to use information about pupils' progress and achievements to track and improve the performance of individual pupils. There is a very good team spirit among the staff and governors who are well motivated and want to do their best by the school and its pupils. The senior teachers and the governors have correctly identified what needs to improve and have a good capacity to bring this about. They know that pupils could do better in their writing and mathematics. The school development plan is detailed and sharply focused on driving up standards. The plan is specific and this helps senior staff and governors to measure how well they are meeting their targets. The school forges outstanding partnerships with a range of organisations. It welcomes the views of all members of the school community and is involved in many national and local initiatives, which have brought extra funding, training and resources. Accurate evaluation of teaching has taken place, and inspectors agree with the school's judgements about it, but the monitoring which takes place by subject leaders is not systematic or extensive enough. Where teaching has been identified as less than satisfactory the school has taken action to remedy the situation. It now needs to make all teaching match the good teaching seen in some areas of the school. Through no fault of the school, the budget has been in deficit for the last year and this has meant the school has had to cut back on its spending. This has had a negative impact on learning. The accommodation is as well-maintained as funding will allow, and provides a stimulating learning environment. The management is trying to improve the playground area.

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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>	3	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>	3	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	3	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	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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**

Thank you for letting us visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know what we liked about your school and how we thought it could get even better. What we liked about your school: - You made us all feel very welcome in your school and greeted us with a friendly smile. - You all looked very smart in your school uniform. - You are all learning to read very well. - Most of you behave well around the school. - You told us how much you liked coming to school and doing your work. - You have lots of very interesting and active things to do after school and at lunchtimes. - Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to make sure that you all get the right sort of help you need to help you learn. What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better: - You must all try harder to think and speak before you write things down. - You must try to make your work in maths as good as your reading. - We have asked your teachers to make lessons for older children a bit more exciting and interesting.