



The Spinney Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110765
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278506
Inspection dates 22 September 2005 to 23 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hayster Drive
School category	Community		CB1 9PB
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223568836
Number on roll	202	Fax number	01223568836
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.B Baguley
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. J Mc Crossan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two contracted inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school is on the edge of Cambridge. Most year groups contain thirty pupils. The majority of pupils live in privately owned houses and some live in rented homes. Levels of free school meals are below average. When the youngest children start school their knowledge and understanding are typical for four-year-olds. Overall the school has a lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs but some year groups have average levels. Over three quarters of pupils are from white British families. Few pupils come and go throughout the year. A significant number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A small proportion of pupils are believed not to have English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Spinney is an outstanding primary school. Most parents are very happy with the quality of education provided. One parent said 'We are privileged to have our children in such a well-run school and are very grateful to the headteacher and staff who put in so much to maintain high standards.' The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. Teaching is outstanding in Years 3 to 6 and good in reception and Years 1 and 2. Children are given a good start in the reception class because of effective teaching and leadership. However, pupils' handwriting skills are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they talk enthusiastically about their lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants are very dedicated and care really effectively for pupils. The school gives particularly good value for money. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the capacity of the school to improve is outstanding. The leadership of the school has brought about very successful improvements since the last inspection. For example, standards in Year 6 tests in 2005 are higher and records show that they are likely to be well above the national average. Standards in ICT in Year 6 are above expectations because of the good use of laptops, interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop pupils' standards of handwriting. - Develop the subject leaders' role so that they study pupils' books more effectively. - Improve the quality of the outside play area for the reception class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that most children make outstanding progress in the school. When children enter the school their levels of knowledge and understanding are average overall. Most pupils achieve well in the reception class. They attain above average standards by the start of Year 1 because of consistently good teaching. The majority of pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make outstanding progress. In 2004 tests, pupils in Year 6 attained well above average standards. These pupils made outstanding progress since Year 2 when they attained average standards. In a numeracy lesson seen most Year 6 pupils understood how to carry out complex two-part sums very accurately. The school is in line to attain challenging targets with the present Year 6. However, standards of handwriting are not satisfactory with the result that pupils' work in books is not well presented. This means that many children do not have a neat joined-up style of handwriting. Standards in ICT are above expectations. For instance, many Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets well, creating formulas effectively and making very effective posters to show the differences between the lives of poor and rich Victorian children. School data demonstrate that pupils who speak English as an additional language make good

progress. One pupil who has only been in the school and country for one year now works in most lessons without adult help. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, though the school judged it to be good. Pupils' behaviour is first-class. It is a strength of the school that pupils are involved, through meetings with the school council, in discussions about how bad and good behaviour should be handled. Pupils told us that there is no bullying, although the school has ways to handle any incidents that may occur. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and really enjoy being at school. Most pupils concentrate very well in lessons and so they are learning basic skills very effectively, which will allow them to achieve economic well-being in the future. Overall attendance is above the national average and the school has effective ways to chase up unexplained absence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. After-school activities and group work mean that pupils learn to work together very effectively. Older pupils look after the younger ones through a 'Buddy' system in which Year 6 pupils read with the youngest children every week. Furthermore, the oldest and youngest children make books for each other and then share them. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles effectively but some do eat snacks at break time that have a lot of sugar in them. Assemblies and reflection times in the afternoon mean pupils think very deeply about themselves and others. Pupils contribute to the community effectively by raising money for many charities and victims of recent disasters. When asked why they raised money for all these charities, one replied, 'To help people in great need.' Most pupils are prepared well for life in a multicultural society. Pupils learn about Christianity and other faiths effectively. They study stories from many holy books such as the Quran and the Bible and one said that the story of the Loaves and the Fishes 'teaches us to share things equally.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The school judged teaching as good. Inspection evidence is that teaching and learning are outstanding. Most pupils make excellent progress in Years 3 to 6. This is partly because teachers in Year 3 to 6 use very effective ways to develop pupils' skills so that they work at high levels. In one outstanding Year 5 lesson, significant strengths included the teacher's very high expectations of children, which ensured that children learnt to write very imaginatively. The teachers' very skilful oral feedback for pupils means that they know what they have done well and ways to improve. Inspiring teaching methods allow pupils to practise their writing, adding exciting words on wipeable whiteboards before they copy the work into their books. In some classes pupils are given very good opportunities to evaluate their own work, which means that they learn

to find the strengths and weaknesses in their work. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. Teachers develop pupils' basic skills well. In an ICT lesson seen the teacher's high expectations meant that pupils learnt ICT skills and practised their writing skills at the same time. The very effective use of a specialist ICT teaching assistant means that pupils make good progress. School information demonstrates that teaching and learning are good in the reception class. One outstanding lesson was seen where the teacher used very successful methods to strengthen children's fingers, helping them to write well. Very good use of the teaching assistant means that children practise making shapes in the air and on the playground. Assessment activities are used well in the school. The tracking of pupil progress in English, mathematics and science is very well established and so the school knows which pupils need extra support or challenge. Individual education plans contain specific targets; thus pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Pupils' work in ICT and other subjects is carefully assessed. Teachers' use of marking is not always effective; some pieces of numeracy and literacy work are not marked carefully. This means that pupils are not clear, on a daily basis, about what they have done well or how they could improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is good overall. All subjects are given a reasonable amount of time. Displays around the school celebrate effectively pupils' achievements in many subjects. Pupils talk enthusiastically about mathematics lessons. The school has an interesting curriculum that makes learning enjoyable. One pupil said 'Teachers make numeracy fun and they make games that make it easy to understand.' Pupils also talk positively about design and technology projects where they have made moving models and books. Throughout the school there is a high emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills so that they use imaginative vocabulary when writing stories or letters.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school judged care, guidance and support of pupils as good but the inspection found it to be outstanding. The school is very successful in providing a secure and happy environment where pupils can learn effectively. The care provided for pupils' safety and well-being is very good. Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to pick up any worries that they have. Pupils are confident about approaching any adult, knowing that they will be listened to. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff know how to raise concerns. The school works successfully with other agencies to ensure that pupils with specific problems are supported very well. Pupils with special educational needs or from minority ethnic groups are given very good support by teaching staff and teaching assistants. The high priority given to the pupils' personal well-being encourages them to support and care for each other.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school evaluates leadership and management as good; however, the inspection team judged it to be outstanding. The headteacher's strong leadership is outstanding. This is partly because standards in Year 6 have significantly improved in English, mathematics and science. This is mainly as a result of better use of assessment activities, which means that pupils make greater progress. All members of staff, who work together very effectively as a team, meet together regularly and discuss individual pupils' progress. This means that every child's progress is watched very closely. The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding. The very clear vision of the headteacher ensures that pupils from all backgrounds, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who have learning difficulties are effectively integrated into school life and are treated as equals. The inspectors agree that the improvement since the last inspection is outstanding. Very effective observations of teaching have improved the quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 since the last inspection so that it is excellent now. Teaching in the reception class also has outstanding features and means that younger children achieve effectively. Good assessment and planning mean that pupils make good progress in their ICT and geography skills. The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses very well. It has created a good development plan which is driving rapid improvements in the school. The headteacher has an effective working relationship with the Chair of Governors. Governors are involved effectively in the creation of this plan and parents' ideas are included. Governors come in to visit the school while it is working but those visits are not clearly focused on studying standards and some subject leaders do not have a great deal of contact with their governor. Subject leaders manage their areas well and work together effectively as a team. They have analysed pupils' test results effectively, which means that most pupils in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress. However, they do not monitor pupils' books effectively and this is partly why, for instance, teachers' marking is not consistently used to develop pupils' work on a daily basis.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	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	1	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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	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	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	1	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch an assembly. What we thought was good about your school: - You really work very hard in your lessons and teachers encourage you to do your best. - Mostly you are kind to each other and older pupils look after younger ones very well. - Teaching assistants care for you very well and help you to do good work. - Your headteacher has excellent ideas about ways to improve the school. - The school council means you can suggest ideas to make the school even better. - Laptops and 'Whiteboards' are helping you to improve your ICT work. We have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. We hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are: - Make your handwriting neater; - For all your teachers to look at your books more carefully; - Make the outside play area for the youngest children more exciting. Keep up the good work at The Spinney Primary School.