



Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 114746
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 279441
Inspection dates 3–4 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Williams HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hawthorn Avenue
School category	Community		Colchester
Age range of pupils	3–7		Essex CO4 3JP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 861836
Number on roll (school)	146	Fax number	01206 866432
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms J Fahy
		Headteacher	Mrs C Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–7	3–4 October 2006	279441

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery is situated on the Greenstead estate in Colchester where there is a considerable amount of social deprivation. It is an average sized infant school, though numbers fluctuate and there is significant movement in and out during the school year. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is low and the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and disabilities are high. The school promotes very good relationships within the community and the mission statement 'to provide a happy school where all can enjoy learning' is certainly fulfilled. The governors, headteacher and all staff are rightly proud of providing a caring and supportive haven for children where they are able to flourish and develop.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery is an effective school with some excellent features. An outstanding strength is in the care, support and guidance offered to all pupils. Pupils are very well supported in their learning and their progress is tracked carefully from the Nursery onwards. They really like coming to school and take part in lessons with enthusiasm, showing great enjoyment in what they are doing. However, their attendance and sometimes their punctuality are not good, despite the efforts made by the school to improve them. Pupils' behaviour is good and the way they work together, is outstanding. They do not like to see any of their classmates hurt or upset and quickly learn how to live, work and play together well. Beginning in the Nursery year, the emphasis on improving children's social, speaking and listening skills provides a good base for their further development. In Reception, children make good progress. Since the last inspection, for those leaving at the end of Year 2, standards have risen significantly to just below national averages, though standards are not quite so good in writing. Mathematics is particularly strong. For many pupils this represents good or excellent progress from a low starting point when they begin school. All adults have a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils and they form an effective team. For example, the site manager, who is also a teaching assistant, contributes fully to the life of the school, for example, by providing rugby coaching and chess clubs. Midday assistants know each pupil individually and help them to become confident and sociable at meal times. The focus on adopting a healthy lifestyle is good. Pupils' social development is outstanding and their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are excellent role models for pupils and parents. They provide children with a great deal of support and encouragement, using praise to motivate. Close links are established with the local community, such as through social services, in order to support pupils and their families. Parents are positive about all aspects of the school. Literacy, numeracy and other classes are provided for them and the school continually seeks ways of involving them more in their children's learning. Given these successes, the quality of leadership and management is clearly outstanding. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The school knows where its strengths and areas for development lie and prides itself on being a 'learning' school where all staff are developed in their careers. The significant numbers of new teachers this year have, in a very short space of time, come to know and understand the expectations and ethos of the school and have quickly settled into the expected ways of working. They have achieved this through the support of an able and experienced set of senior staff and the leadership of a long serving headteacher who is much respected. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance and punctuality. - Raise standards of writing by implementing the planned initiatives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The assessment of children on entry is thorough and shows that a significant number begin school life with weak speaking, listening and social skills. The focus on moral, personal and social education in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) improves the communication skills of children and equips them well for learning in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in raising standards in Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, pupils' performance is nearly in line with that of other pupils nationally, except in writing. Standards in mathematics are better than in other subjects. This represents good progress and in 2006, virtually all pupils achieved their targets. Pupils are independent yet very cooperative learners who work well together, listening to each other and sharing ideas. The school caters for a significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and tracks them alongside other pupils carefully and ensures they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attitudes to learning are very good and pupils really enjoy coming to school. There are many opportunities provided for personal development which result in pupils developing a clear understanding of right and wrong and how to cooperate. They respect and understand the feelings and beliefs of others and celebrate different cultures at appropriate times. Pupils are encouraged to offer views about their learning and how the school could be improved. For example, they contribute to making their classroom rules and to how the school is run through an active pupil council, about which they are enthusiastic. 'It is a good thing to help people do the right thing', they say. Their health and well-being are encouraged through initiatives such as milk and fruit at playtimes and a commitment to wholesome food at lunchtimes. The school has achieved the Advanced Healthy Schools Award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm the school's view that the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully based on the national strategies with a sharp focus on individual needs. They are aware of their pupils' preferred learning styles and incorporate these into their planning. For example, the improvement in mathematics is attributed in part to an active approach which successfully engages and interests pupils. Role-play provides pupils with opportunities to use their imagination well. Teachers often link curriculum areas effectively, for example reinforcing numeracy or emotional

development during literacy lessons. Learning resources are attractive, well organised and well managed. Interactive whiteboards are used properly and teachers are committed to providing a stimulating, interesting environment. Relationships are very good; pupils show considerable respect for the class rules and the atmosphere created promotes good behaviour. Mixed paired work is excellent in reinforcing relationships. Assessment of learning is consistent and thorough. Skilful questioning is used by teachers to assess pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. 'Essex Target Tracker' is carefully employed to monitor pupil progress and to inform teachers' planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, well-planned and meets statutory requirements. In the Foundation Stage the activities are appropriate and provide a good introduction to school life. This builds progressively into Years 1 and 2 where there is considerable emphasis on 'cross-over' transition arrangements to ensure that pupils continue to enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Throughout this there is a clear focus on engagement and enjoyment. Speaking and listening activities are given high priority in all classes and determined efforts are made to ensure that an inclusive curriculum is provided to reinforce the school ethos of valuing each child and developing pupils' self-esteem. This is successful. Enjoyment is evident with pupils fully involved, responding well to tasks and showing pleasure in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well provided for, with clear targets and progress carefully monitored. The school identifies gifted and talented children and gives some good extension activities for them. The quality of the outdoor area has improved since the last inspection and a variety of stimulating play activities enrich the curriculum, though the facilities for the Foundation Stage remain limited. A wide-ranging extra-curricular programme enriches and extends the curriculum. Parents are encouraged, and given every help, to support their children in their work at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge the care, support and guidance provided for pupils to be outstanding and significant strengths of the school. They have a major impact on pupils' achievements. All adults know the pupils well and are committed to sustaining a nurturing environment in which they feel secure and can achieve. Children really enjoy coming to school and parents appreciate the caring atmosphere and support provided for them. The rewards scheme is very effective and pupils are consistently praised when appropriate to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Adults are quick to respond to pupils' needs and identify those in need of additional support. As a consequence, pupils are also supported very well with academic guidance. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place. All adults are well-trained in child care guidance and protection procedures. Children thus feel safe and secure and know how to seek help. A striking feature is the way, as a result of the care they receive, children

demonstrate the ability to share with each other and work cooperatively together. For example, 'Buddy Bus Stop' encourages pupils to support each other in the playground and promotes good relationships.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

There is a very strong sense of teamwork with governors, teachers and non-teaching staff playing an active part in the life of the school. Governors' expertise is strong and they have an excellent strategic view of what they want the school to achieve and how to do so. Communication between all sections within the school community is very good and those involved from outside, for example from social services, speak highly of everyone's commitment to the children and their families. Parents' views are welcomed and acted upon. The school is very well led and managed and progress from the time of the last inspection has been good. There is a strong focus on raising pupils' achievement and standards. Never afraid to attempt something different, the school carefully tries new ideas out and then evaluates whether or not they have been a success, using the experience to help improve. For example, the grouping of children by ability in Year 2 has reaped rewards and so the system has been continued. The headteacher's analysis of performance data and the overall effectiveness of self-evaluation are outstanding. The main self-evaluation document that summarises this contains good evidence that explains the impact of what the school does well; it is, however, very weighty and some key messages get lost in the detail. It remains an honest evaluation of strengths and areas for development and reflects the school's commitment to improvement. Performance management is well established and staff development has a high priority. A regular programme of lesson observation and monitoring of teaching and learning is in place. This is done well with clear targets for further improvement emerging. The allocation of financial resources is based upon sound principles and the school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 October 2006 Dear Children Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery, Hawthorn Avenue, Colchester, Essex, CO4 3JP Mrs Matharu and I enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for welcoming us. We think that your school is a very good school and that you make good progress, particularly in maths. We know you can do better with your writing! Mrs Ireland and all the teachers, teaching assistants and other adults who work in school take very good care of you both in the classroom and at playtime. You are well behaved and obviously really enjoy coming to school. We like the way you care for each other and the way boys and girls work and play together. It is a shame that some of you skip days or do not manage to get to school on time, as you miss some exciting beginnings to the school day. Your school is bright and cheerful and you keep it clean and tidy. You are offered nice meals at lunchtimes and it is good to see so many of you eating fruit and vegetables at playtime and drinking your milk. We hope you will continue to work hard and that your harvest celebrations went well. With best wishes John Williams Her Majesty's Inspector