



Hamstel Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114771
LEA SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LEA
Inspection number 279446
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Wheeldon LI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hamstel Road
School category	Community		SS2 4PQ
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01702468461
Number on roll	350	Fax number	01702602064
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.G Etherington
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Valerie Tarte

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	Inspection number 279446
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) of schools and one additional inspector AI.

Description of the school

Hamstel Infant School and Nursery is a large school with 349 full-time and 90 part-time pupils. It serves an area of predominantly social housing, although four out of every ten children live outside the immediate area. The school benefits from extra resources from central government as it is part of an Excellence Cluster. Pupils start school in the September of the year they reach five but many attend the nursery from the age of three upwards. Three out of every ten pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is about average but the number with statements of special educational need is very low. There are a few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's aim is Working, playing and achieving together and the golden rule is be safe and show you care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hamstel Infants and Nursery is a good school with some outstanding features in the provision it makes for pupils' personal development. Most children start at Hamstel in the recently built nursery where resources are outstanding, the quality of teaching is good and children of all abilities make good progress. The nursery makes a significant contribution to developing children's basic skills and prepares them well for their move into full-time schooling. Children aged three and four make good progress and achieve standards in line with those expected for their ages in mathematical, and in personal, social and emotional development. Progress is also good in aspects of communication, language and literacy but attainment is still below that expected of pupils aged five. Parents are closely involved in their child's education and there are strong partnerships between home and school, for example in sharing reading books. Whatever their abilities, pupils aged five to seven make good progress. This is a result of the quality of teaching and support they receive in lessons from well qualified and experienced teaching assistants. Even so, standards in writing are too low. There are good links between the school and many other agencies. The school is also engaged in a number of initiatives, often with support from the Southend Excellence Cluster. These initiatives are monitored effectively and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and their progress. There have been recent and significant improvements in attendance but it is still below average. The school knows its strengths and knows where it needs to improve, but it is not so good at analysing what it needs to do to effect improvement. Once the school decides on a way forward it is good at making changes. It has successfully addressed all the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, and is well placed to promote further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards of writing. - make better use of all the information it holds to improve the quality of teaching and further raise standards. - improve attendance rates.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges that pupils' achievements are good, and they are. From a low baseline, many pupils make good progress so that by the age of seven the majority of pupils reach standards in reading, mathematics and in science similar to those in other schools. Those with the greatest difficulties make the greatest gains as a result of effective support to ensure their individual needs are met. This is particularly the case in reading. The few pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well. Standards in speaking, listening and reading have all improved since the last inspection. The achievement of more able pupils has similarly improved, particularly in mathematics, and continues to be a focus for further improvement. Challenging targets are set and these are met in the main. However, standards in writing are too low and more still needs to be done. The nursery is particularly successful in developing personal, social

and emotional development and when children enter Reception class they are already working well together and exercising responsibility. In these early years pupils make good progress: attainment is in line with expectations in mathematical development but below average in communication, language and literacy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and in some areas, outstanding. They learn well from the very good examples set by all staff. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the children are very good. Pupils demonstrate kindness and respect for one another. Pupils behave very well in class and at playtimes. They love being in school and have very positive attitudes about their work and play. Pupils' knowledge of festivals such as Christmas and Diwali is good but they do not always understand how different beliefs and cultures influence how people choose to lead their lives. In spite of the school's good efforts to make parents aware that time off school hinders their child's progress, attendance is still low, mainly because a few parents allow their child to stay away from school for no justifiable reason. Pupils are helped effectively to develop a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. For example, they learn about healthy foods and road safety. The school council gives them good experience of working together for the benefit of the community. Pupils contribute significantly to the local and wider community, for example, by helping in the campaign to keep the local library and by raising funds for national charities. Pupils are well prepared for the future, because of their positive attitudes, the skills they are learning and their good level of achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their education and the quality of learning is good. Pupils of all abilities apply themselves well and make good progress in lessons. In some classes the quality of teaching is good, for example in the nursery, and in these lessons the good teaching leads to good learning. In the best lessons teachers know the pupils very well, they quickly establish routines and high expectations, and ensure that lessons move along with a brisk pace. More generally, teachers make good use of the very wide range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and other computer equipment. In the majority of lessons the school judges that the teaching is satisfactory and this is confirmed by inspectors. Even so, pupils in these classes still make good progress and their learning is good. In part this is because they are taught diligently, but it is also because the school engages and deploys its large body of teaching assistants very effectively. They support teachers well, provide a high level of care for the children and play an important part in promoting high quality learning. Throughout the school teaching assistants work closely with pupils, ensuring they all stay on task throughout their lessons and any mis-behaviour is quickly addressed. Thus lesson time

is used very fully and even in classes where teaching is satisfactory pupils of all abilities make good progress because of the close level of supervision.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school considers curriculum provision to be good. Inspectors agree but recognise that the curriculum for those aged three and four is very good. At this stage the school focuses on children developing independence, curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. There is a good balance between provision for play and the direct teaching of basic skills. The curriculum in the nursery is outstanding. A broad curriculum is carefully planned for those aged five to seven to encourage pupils' enjoyment of learning. Additional support is built into the curriculum to ensure that the needs of the least able are met. Flexibility is used well to provide additional teaching groups in mathematics for the most able. The curriculum is enriched with a very good range of additional opportunities, for example in sport and art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has judged correctly that care is good and inspectors found that pupils of all ages are nurtured and cared for very effectively. Parents are pleased with the care and help their children are given. Underpinning the provision is the outstanding care shown by all staff for each individual. Pupils have confidence in the adults employed by the school and know that any worries will be dealt with sympathetically. All health and safety arrangements are fine. There are very efficient systems for identifying any child experiencing difficulties. Excellent links with agencies such as speech therapists and social services help the school provide the right support to ensure pupils make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator and her assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties make at least good progress. They also work well with parents and show them how they can contribute to their child's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This school is led and managed well. There is a good sense of direction and the focus is very much on improving pupils' achievement and personal development by providing a rich and varied education. There are good systems for finding out parents' and others' view of the school: senior staff and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and understand what more they need to do to improve. The school has a very clear picture of each pupil's progress and there are very effective systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. However, the school is not so good at making best use of the information on its teaching to plan improvements, for example, in identifying patterns and addressing shortcomings that are apparent from lesson observations. Funds are used efficiently and resources are deployed well, for example, to employ a large number of teaching assistants who provide very good value for money. Recruiting

staff is not always easy, but once they arrive in the school staff enjoy working here and hence turnover is low. Teaching assistants are well trained to support pupils' learning and the school is successful at encouraging teaching assistants to continue their professional development and to become teachers. There are good and beneficial links with other agencies, such as local health providers, and with other schools, mainly through the Southend Excellence Cluster. The governing body is growing into its role as a critical friend to the school and diligently carries out all its duties.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	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?	2	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	2	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

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

We enjoyed seeing you when we came to Southend. There are lots of good things about being at Hamstel Infants and Nursery and we know you enjoy being at school. We particularly like the way you look after each other and work together. We can see that you are doing well in reading, mathematics and science but you need to concentrate hard and do better in your writing. I know Mrs Tarte will do all she can to make sure the adults in your school carry on looking after you well and help you to learn even better. Make sure you don't take any days off unless you are really poorly.