



Field Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117160
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279999
Inspection dates 31 October 2005 to 1 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Watford Field Road
School category	Community		WD18 0AZ
Age range of pupils	7 to 12		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923 221877
Number on roll	204	Fax number	01923221877
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.A Wilkes
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Julie Henley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the centre of Watford. Its catchment includes mixed housing and an Urban Regeneration Project area. Almost all pupils live nearby. While the majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds, over 40% come from minority ethnic groups. These pupils are mainly from Pakistani families but an increasing number come from a range of European countries. The number of pupils admitted at times other than the start of the school year is rising. Forty-two per cent of pupils do not have English as their first language, a high figure compared with most schools. The proportion of pupils in the school who have learning difficulties is a little above average. When pupils join the school, their levels of attainment are below average overall. This is particularly because of the high proportion who need help with English and the increase in pupils whose previous education has been in other countries.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Field Junior School rightly judges itself to be a good school. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are in line with national averages. This shows that the pupils make good progress, because so many of them are admitted to the school needing help with their English skills. Pupils are taught well throughout the school. Their personal and social development is good and the school cares effectively for all individuals. It is successful at integrating pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and enabling them to acquire the basic skills they need to be efficient learners. There is a strong spirit of teamwork among the staff. They are led well by the headteacher who has a clear vision for how the school will continue to develop. The budget is used carefully and spending focuses well on what will benefit pupils most. The school gives good value for money. There are effective ways of measuring the school's success and relevant plans for its continuing development. These rightly include involving pupils more effectively in planning what they need to learn next and improving reading standards further. Inspectors feel that the quality of education will also be enhanced by the availability of better outdoor resources at breaktimes. This is an aspect that the pupils would especially like to see improved. There is a good partnership with parents who mostly speak highly of what the school offers. The school has continued to move forward well since its last inspection and shows a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out the plans to raise the standard of reading - Involve pupils even more in their education by establishing a consistent system for setting learning targets with individuals - Improve the range and quality of the resources available in the playground at breaktimes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's overall performance in the national tests for Year 6 pupils has been broadly in line with national averages in recent years. The inspection found that this reflects current standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils generally meet the challenging targets set for them. English results have improved well over the past three years, demonstrating the success of the school's efforts to raise standards in writing. As a result, in 2003 and 2004, standards in English were significantly above the national average. Current assessments of pupils show that some of them, especially in Year 6, do not make as much progress in reading as they need to and the school has produced a good plan to remedy this. Pupils do well in information and communication technology (ICT) and achieve standards that are similar to those expected nationally. The school's tracking of achievement shows that pupils from all backgrounds make good progress in relation to their starting points. This includes those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school is determined that its

minority ethnic pupils should reach the standards expected nationally, even if they join the school with limited language skills. It is part of a pilot project to raise the standards achieved by this group, and early results from the project show improved progress, especially by Pakistani pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their attendance is satisfactory. They have positive attitudes to school and enjoy all it offers them. One Year 6 pupil said that this is particularly because 'teachers are really supportive.' They say that they feel safe and, if another child hurts or upsets them, it is dealt with thoughtfully and firmly. Pupils' behaviour is good. However, they are not enabled to play together as effectively as they could at break times because there is very little equipment for them to use in the playgrounds. This limits the opportunities for them to develop their social and physical skills further. Pupils learn effectively about how to stay safe. For instance, a recent whole-school project taught them about the emergency services and how to make '999' calls. There is good encouragement for them to lead healthy lives. They have regular physical education lessons, learn about how their bodies work and the importance of a healthy diet. The effective development of key skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT supports pupils' future economic well-being. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through lessons, such as those in personal, social and religious education, and through the programme of assemblies. Pupils are prepared effectively for life in a multi-cultural society, both through their work in subjects such as religious education, geography and art, and by being part of the diverse school community. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. They have taken harvest gifts to the elderly people in the locality and the choir sings to local people at Christmas time. Pupils decide which charities they will support and help to organise fund-raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. There are high expectations of what pupils can do and how they will behave that establish a productive learning atmosphere. Lessons are interesting and include a suitably high focus on practising basic skills. Teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to extend their learning. There are very effective opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills. These include regular, paired discussions between pupils and activities to prepare more formal presentations. The team of teaching assistants and the teacher who supports those with English as an additional language contribute well to provision. The school has recently focused on improving its assessment arrangements and work is continuing. The tracking of pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT is now firmly established. This means that the school knows which pupils need extra support or challenge. Pupils' work in

other subjects is assessed satisfactorily. There are good individual plans and records for pupils who have learning difficulties and for those who need extra help to learn English. Teachers use marking well to explain to pupils how they are doing. The quality of written comments in pupils' books is outstanding in some classes. However, there are no consistent arrangements to establish personal learning targets with pupils across the school. The school has rightly identified this as an area for further improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The work that pupils do is rich and varied, with appropriate time given to all subjects. The wide range of pupils' learning needs is met well. There are regular, well-planned lessons in English, mathematics, science and ICT that are the reason pupils make good progress in their development of basic skills. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' work effectively in all subjects, especially in art. The school has been given the awards of 'Artsmark' and 'Activemark Silver'. A very good programme of work is used to develop pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in musical and other performances, such as the production of 'Grease'. Lunchtime and after-school clubs enhance the pupils' experience well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils is good. The school is successful in meeting its aim of providing a caring and happy place to learn. Staff know their pupils well and are quick to pick up on any concerns that they have. Child protection procedures are comprehensive. The arrangements to settle in new pupils and staff are very good. The school's very experienced and skilled welfare officer means that pupils can discuss any problems with an independent and trusted person. Pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities are well supported, cared for and integrated in the school community. The plans to establish more effective target-setting with pupils should mean that their academic progress will be supported even better in future.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has moved forward well since its last inspection because of good leadership and management. The headteacher has established an effective ethos that values the staff and enables them to develop well. This, in turn, benefits the pupils. This is a school that includes all individuals effectively in its provision. Pupils speak of the warm welcome that is given to newcomers, and the school makes successful efforts to ensure that all its pupils do well. The senior leadership team works together well and promotes effective teamwork among the staff. Adults act as good role models for children and establish a pleasant atmosphere for learning. There are good initiatives to ensure that all subject leaders become equally effective at checking the quality of teaching and

learning to encourage even higher standards. Effective arrangements for self-evaluation mean that the school has a clear view of where it stands and of how it intends to improve further. All interested parties have been consulted well and are kept well informed about developments. The school maintains a good partnership with parents, most of whom have very positive opinions about its provision. Governors give satisfactory support and are increasingly involved in visiting the school to see at first hand how well it is working. New governors have been appointed quite recently and are gradually playing a more effective role in the school's management. The budget is managed well and prudent spending in recent years has enabled the school to cope well with the financial constraints that have resulted from a temporary dip in its pupil numbers. The school is in a good position to continue to do well. There is a strong commitment to the well-being of the pupils that provides the community with an effective local school where every child matters and is provided for well.

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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	NA	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	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

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	3	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 welcoming us to your school and helping us to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about the most important things we saw during our visit. These are some of the best things: - You enjoy coming to school, behave well and get on well with the other children in your school. - You do well in your lessons because your teachers and teaching assistants help you to learn well. - Mrs Henley makes sure that your school runs efficiently and is a pleasant place for you to learn. - You work hard to improve your writing and this is giving you an important skill for your future lives. - You give a warm welcome to children who are new to your school. - You are given plenty of interesting activities, including clubs and visits outside school time, and these help to prepare you for your next schools and your adult lives. These are things that might be made a bit better: - Many of you could be even better readers and we hope you will work hard with your teachers to make this happen. - Your teachers have plans to involve you more in planning what you need to learn next and we think this will help you to make faster progress. - We agree with you that it would be good if there were more things for you to do in the playground at breaktimes. Keep making the most of all that your school offers you.