



# Peartree Spring Infants' School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 117206  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280012  
**Inspection dates** 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hydean Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		SG2 9GG
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 233900
<b>Number on roll</b>	217	<b>Fax number</b>	01438 233901
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. John Procter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms. Julie Legg

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 7	1 March 2006 - 2 March 2006	280012

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a residential neighbourhood which includes areas of deprivation. Pupils' attainment on admission is below average. The school participates in various initiatives to support families, such as a Children's Trust, which brings together a range of local health, education and social services. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British families and about a sixth represent a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as their first or main language. As well as its regular classes, the school offers a Nurture Group to pupils with particular social and emotional needs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The school considers its overall effectiveness to be outstanding and the inspection team agrees. The parents and pupils also value it immensely. The headteacher and her deputy have very high expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve, and the drive and expertise to realise their ambitions. Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception classes and reach standards by the end of the year that are at least in line with those expected for their age group. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught extremely well and reach standards that are higher than the national average. Pupils' personal development is excellent and is reflected in the very high quality of relationships and behaviour. There is an exceptionally good curriculum and very good levels of learning resources. The care and support offered to pupils and their parents are first rate. The quality of care in the Nurture Group is of the highest order. Since its last inspection, the school has built further on its high standards and is in an extremely good position to continue to improve. It gives outstanding value for money. There are no major areas for further development. Aspects of the school that are good but not yet outstanding are being focused on well and continue to improve, especially the provision in the Reception classes and the training of new governors. Attendance, however, remains no better than average, in spite of tireless efforts by the staff to improve it. Some pupil absences are unnecessary and mean that a few children do not fully benefit from the excellent provision.

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

- Continue to work with parents to eliminate unnecessary absences by pupils. - Continue with the successful initiatives to ensure that provision in the Reception classes is of consistently high quality and to train new governors.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

From a below average starting point on admission to Reception, the progress made by pupils of all backgrounds and all capabilities is outstanding, as a result of high quality teaching. Pupils meet, and often exceed, the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Overall performance by Year 2, as shown by the end of year assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, has been consistently above the national average every year since the last inspection. Standards in English are particularly impressive, with the school's performance in writing exceptionally high in 2005. Over the past two years, action to improve results in mathematics even further has been successful and standards have risen well. The proportion of pupils who reach Level 3 in all three assessments is much higher than the national average. The pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to do well again this year. The school sets and achieves challenging targets for its pupils. This includes those with learning difficulties or disabilities, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the pupils in the Nurture Group.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy being at school. Their behaviour is excellent. They are exceptionally polite both to adults and each other. This has been achieved by the consistent use of praise for good attitudes and behaviour by all teaching and non-teaching staff, who act as extremely good role models. As a result, lessons proceed without disruption and pupils feel secure in the school. There is no evidence of any unfair behaviour between pupils and they say they are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a problem. There are excellent procedures to support vulnerable pupils. The Nurture Group is exceptional in this respect and the school also makes good use of outside agencies where it is beneficial. Pupils are well aware of diversity in society as well as within the school, and they respect the feelings of others. They learn quickly to contribute to the school community. For instance, they eagerly participate in the school's 'Community Volunteer' programme and the school council. They carry out litter collections, take care of the outdoor space and help to take care of the dining room and cloakrooms. They are also aware of their wider obligations, for example, by raising funds for charity. The school's strong emphasis on activities to enable them to be healthy and stay safe is very effective. They eat well in school and take regular exercise, with a wide range of games provided in the playground as well as after-school clubs. Pupils' good standards of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, coupled with their excellent social development, equip them well for their next school and give them a flying start with the skills they will need in the world of work. Over recent years attendance at the school has been close to the national average. There are very good systems to monitor absences and to follow these up where necessary, although not all parents fully support the efforts to raise attendance rates.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall. During the inspection, all teaching observed was at least good and much was excellent. When the school realised a few terms ago that teaching in the Foundation Stage could be stronger, it took effective steps, through the management, recruitment and deployment of staff, to improve teaching in that part of the school. It is now good. Pupils in all age groups develop very positive attitudes to learning because of the consistently high expectations of staff, both of their behaviour and achievement. Teachers plan lessons well, with a wide variety of activities to maintain pupils' interest. They use exciting resources and imaginative techniques to stimulate and motivate them. Tasks are matched closely to the needs of different groups of pupils within the class. In the best lessons teachers also show a keen awareness of the different learning styles of pupils. Teachers mark work well so that pupils know how they can improve, setting wide-ranging targets for

both individuals and groups. The school has developed thorough systems for the tracking of pupils' individual achievement, which assist teachers in planning the next stages of pupils' work as well as ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are covered. As a result, all groups of pupils within the school, including those who are identified as having learning difficulties, make exceptionally good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's curriculum is of a high quality. Thorough planning ensures that all aspects of the required curriculum are covered. The system of year teams is strong and promotes consistency and efficiency in teachers' planning. Initiatives in recent years have led to a highly creative curriculum and very purposeful links between subjects. There is an extremely effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The school makes good use of visitors, for instance from the local police and fire services, to teach pupils about safety, as well as guests from different cultural backgrounds. Visits to places of interest, links with other schools and the use of specialist teachers and coaches all add to the quality of pupils' experiences. Considering the age of the pupils, there is an exceptionally wide range of clubs and extra activities for pupils to enjoy. They are keen to join these and gain great benefit from them in their overall development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school shows a very high level of care for its pupils. Parents are unanimous in their support for this aspect of its work. The level of individual care for all pupils, including those who may be vulnerable, is excellent. Teachers know pupils very well and are quick to identify potential problems. The Nurture Group provides exceptional support for pupils who need it. Liaison with parents, both formal and informal, throughout the school is very good. As a result, pupils achieve very well. Provision to ensure safety and child protection is thorough and risk assessments are carried out for all activities where necessary. There are good links with the junior school to ensure that transition to the next stage of education is smooth.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's outstanding performance and continuing improvement are the result of exceptional leadership by the headteacher and very effective, energetic teamwork among the staff. The school has a fine track record of developing young or inexperienced staff extremely well and they rapidly take a full part in the team. The performance management and continuing professional development of all staff have a high priority and are two of the main reasons that the school is so successful. Standards, teaching and the curriculum are checked regularly and thoroughly, and successful action is taken to address any areas of weakness. Examples of recent

effective initiatives are those to improve mathematics and the Foundation Stage provision. The school has a very clear picture of how well it is doing and the necessary expertise to maintain high standards. There is no complacency and staff are constantly striving to do the very best for the pupils. Pupils and parents are consulted very well about developments and their views and ideas are valued. Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive and the school works very hard to involve them in their children's learning. There are effective partnerships with a wide range of social and educational agencies that contribute well to the overall provision for pupils. The governing body is led by a very competent chairman, but there is quite a high turnover of governors. The recruitment and retention of governors sometimes prove difficult. New governors are trained very well and bring valuable expertise to the school, but the turnover results in some lack of continuity. The senior management team and the governors manage the budget very well. The school is currently in a very comfortable financial position. It uses its resources wisely to the benefit of the pupils and has clear plans for future spending. Since its last inspection, the school has built very well on its successes and remedied any shortcomings it has identified. Its pupils do very well in both their academic and personal development. It is in a position to continue to provide extremely well for the local community.

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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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	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>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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

<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 making us so welcome in your school and helping us to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about what we saw on our visit. Here are some of the best things: - You enjoy school a great deal and your behaviour is excellent. This means that you learn well and make lots of friends - We were impressed with the ways you all help each other; for instance, by looking after the playground and helping in the dining room - You are very polite and have very good manners - Your parents are right to be very pleased with your school - You have very good teachers who make your lessons exciting and interesting - As well as your lessons, your school gives you plenty of clubs and other activities, and you enjoy taking part in these - The adults care about each one of you; they listen to how you feel about school and make sure you know what to learn next - Miss Legg works very well with your teachers and the governors to make sure that your school keeps on improving There is really only one part of your school that needs to be better. Sometimes a few children are absent or late when they do not need to be. We have asked your teachers to keep working hard to make sure that everyone comes to school whenever possible. We think that your school is an excellent one and hope that you keep making the most of your time at Peartree Spring.