



# Homerswood Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

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education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 117252  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280023  
**Inspection dates** 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Keith Sadler LI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Kirklands
<b>School category</b>	Community		AL8 7RF
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01707320610
<b>Number on roll</b>	210	<b>Fax number</b>	01707371293
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Paul Whyatt
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Keely Folker

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Homerswood Primary and Nursery is an urban primary school with 210 pupils on roll including 19 part-time children in the nursery. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. 33 pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is now a satisfactory school. At the time of the last inspection in September 2003, the school was found to have a number of serious weaknesses. Since that time there have been across-the-board improvements and the previous weaknesses have been eradicated and the school now provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils enter the nursery and reception class with standards that are in line with expected levels. Provision in the Foundation Stage is now good, much improved since the previous inspection, and although their achievement is satisfactory overall there are good aspects. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall. In some classes, such as in Years 2 and 6, it is good. Currently, pupils in the Year 6 class are on course to attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science, though there is a weakness in boys writing. In addition, there is a need to ensure that the needs of the gifted and talented pupils are met. Parents are very supportive of the school. In particular they say that their children enjoy school and they make good progress due to the good quality teaching and learning. There has been outstanding improvement in the school's leadership and management since the last inspection and there is very significant capacity to improve further. The head teacher, who is currently on maternity leave, has made an outstanding contribution to developing the school's effectiveness. Working in close partnership with the deputy head (currently the acting head) the impact of the improvements since her appointment has been very good. For example, self-evaluation processes are outstanding, teaching and learning have improved as has subject leadership.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the priorities identified in the school improvement plan, in particular by addressing weaknesses in the standards of boys' writing. - Ensure that provision is broadened to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children enter the school with standards that are typical for their age. At the time of the previous inspection, there were weaknesses in the provision in the Foundation Stage and, overall, achievement was unsatisfactory. This is not now the case. Children in the Foundation Stage, both in the nursery and reception class, achieve satisfactorily in all areas of learning and standards are in line with expectations. Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and although pupils are currently making satisfactory progress overall. Standards in Year 2 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily from a starting point which meets expectations for 6 year olds. There are indications in most year groups that their achievement is improving in English, mathematics and science. Currently, for example, the pupils in Year 6 standards are average and are on course to achieve results that

are above expectations. This was reflected in the national test results for 2005. These show that standards for pupils age 11 improved on the 2004 results to average levels, although in English, particularly in writing, standards were below average. Challenging targets were met. This improvement is due to the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. In addition, improvements in the rigour and focus of leadership and management combined with the very close monitoring of pupils' progress and the subsequent setting of challenging targets, have boosted learning. This ensures that pupils of all abilities including those with learning difficulties make similar progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now similar to the national average. A parent commented 'my daughter loves going to school'. Findings confirm that pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Although a few parents expressed concerns about the pupils' behaviour, this is now good. Pupils behave well during lessons and at other times. Pupils feel safe and say the school works hard to stamp out occasional instances of bullying. The school has recently gained 'Healthy School' accreditation and pupils clearly understand why it is important to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and enjoy the improved school lunches. Pupils undertake plenty of physical education and the football and netball clubs are especially popular. Pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions and they play a very active role within day-to-day school life and in the wider community. The school council, for example, raises funds for charity and pupils in Years 3 to 6 volunteer to help during playtime through the school's own 'Buddy' scheme. Pupils' positive attitudes and sound basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT equip them well for their future lives within the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning over the past two years and it is now good. One parent said 'my daughter is thriving both academically and emotionally' due to the good teaching. Teachers' planning is of high quality, and the work set is very well matched to the differing learning needs of the pupils. Lessons always have a clear purpose and teachers' explanations of lesson objectives help to engage the pupils' interest. Staff manage pupils very well which results in very good, purposeful relationships and good behaviour. Support staff make a positive contribution in these areas. The school has placed a particular emphasis on developing the pupils' learning and this is now having a positive effect. Teachers invariably ensure that the teaching strategies used cater well for the wide range of the pupils' preferred learning styles. Very good opportunities are provided for the

pupils to work with partners and small groups, and this too helps to make sure that the pupils' interest is maintained. In addition, the excellent target setting and assessment arrangements ensure that the pupils have a very good understanding of what they need to learn next in order to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum in the main school and in the Foundation Stage is good and is carefully adapted to meet the needs and interests of pupils. The school is imaginative and creative in the way lessons are timetabled. Although provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good, provision for pupils with particular gifts and talents is more limited. The many after-school and lunchtime clubs and activities are popular and participation encourages pupils to use their initiative and become more self-confident. Annual residential visits to outdoor activity centres help pupils in Year 3 to 6 to experience the wider world and they also learn to work as a team. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education provides clear information about staying healthy and keeping safe. It enables pupils to develop their personal skills and understand the importance of diet and exercise, as well as educate them well in the area of citizenship.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a high standard of care and teachers are quick to identify pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties. Pupils feel very well looked after and links with specialist external agencies are good. Constructive working relationships within the school also help to ensure that all pupils receive very good support and advice as and when the need arises. Robust procedures are in place to safeguard pupils' safety, security and health. The high level of support and care ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive in a good frame of mind for learning. Teachers monitor pupils' academic development exceptionally closely. Systems for setting targets for improvement and tracking pupils' progress are very effective. Pupils know the level at which they are working and how they can improve. The support provided for children with learning difficulties is very good. Pupils become progressively more confident and competent learners. The school works very well in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that of all abilities and ages make steady progress in their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are now good and there are a number of outstanding features. Working closely with the deputy head, now the acting head teacher, the new head teacher has made an impressive and outstanding start to her leadership of the school. Together, they have taken particularly effective action to remove the serious

weaknesses. The quality of self-evaluation is outstanding and it has been extremely effective. The permanent head is rigorous, focussed and ensures that parents, staff and pupils are included well in the important decisions made. The three members of the leadership team have brought about very significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the role of subject leaders and the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the school. The head has been key in ensuring that the governors are provided with robust, comprehensive and well-conceived information to enable them to meet their responsibilities. Crucially, she has developed significant capacity for further improvement in the school and there are strong indications that achievement is improving and pupils are on course to attain higher standards. She has created a positive and supportive atmosphere in which the staff work closely as a team to support both each other and the pupils. Since the last inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the monitoring and evaluation processes. These are now excellent and an important key to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the pupils' good progress. Information is used well to pin-point future priorities. Governance is good. Governors support and challenge the school well and there are elements of their work that is outstanding. For example, the governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of their direct involvement in the improvement planning processes. This enables them to challenge the staff to raise standards even higher. In addition, they ensure that the school meets all legal requirements.

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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>	3	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	3	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	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	1	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	3	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**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We can understand why you like and are proud of your school. It was good to talk with you and your teachers and to watch your learning. Your school has improved enormously in the past two years. We checked out many things about your school and this is what we found: - your school is much better than at the time of the last inspection - your head teacher is very good at her job and she makes sure that everyone learns well together - staff and pupils - and that you work well - Homerswood is a happy school - you like school because you feel safe, well cared for and your lessons are good and challenging - your behaviour is good and you take care to make sure that you help and support each other - that all the adults in the school do a good job. Your teachers are good and work hard to make sure that lessons are interesting. They all help you to do your best and make sure that you know what your targets are and help you to understand what you need to do to improve your work. The staff know that they need to make sure that you attain higher standards in English, particularly the boys' writing, mathematics and science. Also, we think that they need to make sure that there are even more opportunities for those of you that have particular talents whether, for example, in lessons, sport, art or music to shine. With very best wishes for your future.