



Horsted Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118442
LEA Medway
Inspection number 280318
Inspection dates 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector Selwyn Ward AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Barberry Avenue
School category	Community		Chatham
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Kent ME5 9TF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 863395
Number on roll	168	Fax number	01634 869436
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nick Morice-Jones
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs L Wainwright

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 14 June 2006 - 15 June 2006	Inspection number 280318
----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small infant school. It includes a unit, shared with the neighbouring junior school, which caters for pupils with physical disabilities, although at the time of the inspection, all of the pupils in the unit were attending the juniors. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities fluctuates quite widely from year to year. It is currently average. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's motto is 'Happy, Safe, Successful'. It achieves these aims for its pupils admirably, making it a good school with many outstanding features. It provides good value for money and has the overwhelming confidence of parents. As one parent wrote, children "make huge progress with their schoolwork and gain lots of confidence at the same time'.

Pupils are really happy in school. They appreciate the sheer range of activities on offer to them and the opportunities they have to cover topics in much greater depth than is commonly seen for infants. Their behaviour is exemplary, they get on very well with each other and enjoy taking on responsibility. Because they are helped to develop from a young age as independent learners, they develop in maturity and are keen to learn and to do their best. Again, as a parent writes, 'the infant school gives them a brilliant start to school life, leaving them very well prepared for junior school'.

All children are made to feel safe and secure. Pupils and parents recognise the high standard of care and support that the school provides for children of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are among the most able. Even pupils with quite complex needs are very well catered for, as are those at an early stage of learning English. All pupils benefit from well-chosen targets that give them clear guidance on how to improve their work. The school's many awards and Quality Marks attest to the success of its work in developing pupils' basic skills and promoting pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Pupils succeed in achieving above average standards. They get off to a cracking start in the Reception classes. The provision is well matched to their needs and all make good progress so that almost all attain all of the early learning goals expected for children of this age and many exceed them. Consistently good teaching, coupled with very well focused support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and for more able pupils, ensures that pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In every year since the last inspection, standards have been above or well above average.

The school's success in achieving its aims is due to good leadership and management. The headteacher has been exceptionally effective in building a strong, stable staff team that support each other and work very well together. School leaders have a generally accurate view of the school, but monitoring of teaching and learning, which is undertaken by all teachers, has not been as rigorous as it could be because much of it describes lessons rather than evaluating them and identifying how they might be improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning even higher by ensuring that monitoring is evaluative and is able to identify and spread the best practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the school with a wide range of abilities but they are broadly average overall. By the end of the Foundation Stage standards are good and pupils of all abilities continue to make good, steady progress throughout their time in school. Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, which are the subjects formally assessed at the end of Year 2. Pupils' test scores have been consistently above or well above average every year since the last inspection. Standards are equally high in other subjects. In religious education, for example, visits and visitors to the school enable pupils to learn much more about different religions than is commonly seen in infant schools. Standards in music are particularly high because all pupils benefit from specialist teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance and punctuality. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and, as a result, pupils grow in confidence as they progress through the school. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have remarkably mature attitudes to their work. They play an active role in school and community events and participate in a range of fund-raising activities. They develop a growing appreciation of cultural diversity in Britain. Pupils work and play very well together and treat each other with respect. The school promotes, and pupils follow, safe practices well. Wide-ranging initiatives ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of the need to develop healthy lifestyles. They participate fully in the many opportunities for them to engage in physical activities. Their views are sought and acted upon. School and class councils, each with their own budgets, successfully encourage the development of enterprise and citizenship skills. Pupils are very well prepared for the transition to the juniors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to the challenges set for them. Throughout the school, children are encouraged to develop as independent learners, for example by making their own choices about how to record results of their investigations in science. By the time they reach Year 2, the more able pupils in particular are regularly researching answers for themselves in the library. In every class, teachers establish, and pupils follow, orderly routines so that they move between activities without fuss. As a result, they often get a lot done in lessons. Relationships are very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and they help to make learning fun by matching activities to pupils' interests and

abilities. Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and to develop their confidence in speaking and listening. Sometimes, however, questions are too closed, so that pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their own answers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it offers a much richer range of opportunities than is usual for infants. For example, all pupils learn basic sign language and topics are covered very comprehensively, often drawing on skills and knowledge from several different subjects. The curriculum is planned to celebrate cultural diversity. It makes an excellent contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. It is further enriched through a wide range of clubs, visits, visitors and themed events. Visits from 'Samuel Pepys' and 'Florence Nightingale' almost literally bring history alive for pupils. Pupils' creativity is enhanced through working with a potter, an expert in mosaics, and puppeteers. Pupils recall the excitement of entering a planetarium and working with town planners to create a model town out of plastic bricks. There is very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, those at an early stage of learning English and pupils with specific talents and gifts. There is a strong commitment to pupils' enjoyment and well-being, and preparation for future learning, citizenship and economic well-being. The very good support given by the local authority, local community and external agencies makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Pupils particularly value the practical guidance they are given through individual targets and teachers' marking that tells them what they need to do better. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support pupils' learning needs. Pupils and their parents agree that children are looked after very well. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection. Very good induction procedures help Reception children and the small number who join the school part-way through their infant education to settle happily into new routines. There are very effective links with parents and a range of local agencies that safeguard the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is outstanding. She has established a very strong ethos where all children are keen to learn and to do their best. The school examines its performance thoroughly and has a generally accurate picture of how well it is doing.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The governing body carries out its responsibilities well, offering constructive challenge to the headteacher and staff. The school is well resourced and accommodation is now good and in the process of further improvement. The school benefits from a remarkably stable teaching staff, but teachers do not remain static as they all have experience of teaching in all three year groups. All share in leading individual subjects and all are involved in monitoring each other's teaching. This monitoring has lacked rigour, however, as it is often largely descriptive and has not focused enough on how lessons could be further improved. The school's improvement and sustained success show that it has very good capacity for continued improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	1	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	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1	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	1	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

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school

Just as your school motto says, you are happy, safe and successful.

You enjoy coming to school; you behave very well indeed and you are keen to do your best.

You are looked after very well.

You do well at school and are very well prepared for when you go on to the juniors.

Your school is very well run.

These are the things that we think could be better

When teachers go to watch other lessons they could look out for ways to make them even better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector