



De Havilland Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134716
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 282658
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Colin Henderson AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Travellers Lane
School category	Community		AL10 8TQ
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01707 346620
Number on roll	298	Fax number	01707 263910
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms.Gail Tolley
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Timothy Day

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school that opened in September 2004 following the closure of two local schools. Its early development was disrupted by a very high level of staff turn-over, some resistance to change within the local community and on-going building work. It moved to one site in January 2005 and mainly serves the surrounding area, one of considerable social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The number who speak English as a second language is below average. Attainment on entry is below average, particularly in language skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has made excellent progress in the short time that it has been open. It provides good value for money. The very strong and influential leadership of the headship team is a key factor in its success and is valued highly by parents - 'a remarkable improvement in the quality of learning since Mr Day took over'. The school, with good support from the local authority, has established rigorous systems that have improved teaching and raised pupils' attainment considerably, particularly by the end of Year 6. They help the school to have an accurate picture of how well it is doing that coincides with that of inspectors. The strong leadership, robust systems, an enthusiastic staff team and an influential governing body put the school in an excellent position to improve further. Children in the Foundation Stage get an excellent start to their schooling because of outstanding teaching and very effective leadership. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully throughout the school. There are very successful intensive support strategies, such as the use of child-friendly slogans to emphasise areas for improvement. These, together with good teaching in most classes, help them to achieve well overall. The school is aiming to improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in all classes. Year 6 pupils make outstanding progress as a result of consistently excellent teaching and attain above average standards. More able pupils and those who find learning difficult make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils' behaviour is improving and is good overall. Most pupils enjoy school, although some do not attend as often as they should. Key staff contribute well to raising standards. The school is improving the work of subject leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning; at present, some leaders do not contribute enough to improvements in teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on current practices to improve teaching so that it is at least good in each class.
- Ensure that subject leaders have greater influence in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement overall is good. It is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 as a result of consistently high quality teaching. Children make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They benefit from an outstanding, stimulating learning environment. A very successful partnership between teachers and support staff ensures that learning activities match the needs of all children. Most achieve the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1, although many do not attain the standards expected in language as they start with weak skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress overall. Year 2 pupils currently attain below average standards. This year group has had a very high level of staff change, did not benefit from the high quality Foundation Stage provision and contains more pupils than usual

who find learning difficult. Their recent achievement is good as a result of more consistently effective teaching and the good use of intensive individual support. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. It is exceptional in Year 6 where outstanding teaching and the very successful use of learning targets help them to improve their work rapidly. The current Year 6 attains standards that are above the national average. The school attained its very challenging targets in 2006, with 86% of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 in English and 98% in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good teaching and effective small group support. They achieve well and many attain the nationally expected level. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress overall. This is not consistently the case in each class and the school is improving the quality of support offered to these pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory overall. Behaviour in classes is generally good and, as a result of the high expectations of the staff, is improving around the school. The very few instances of bullying are taken very seriously and discussion about dealing with this type of behaviour is developed well within the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Themed weekly assemblies focus on moral values and religious festivals. There are few opportunities for older pupils to take on additional responsibilities. Pupils enjoy being on the school council. They appreciate the role they have in influencing school developments which affect them, although would value more frequent council meetings. The school strives hard to improve attendance which is currently below the national average. The school is very careful to follow up unexplained absence or persistent lateness. However, it has been difficult to impress upon a significant number of parents that holidays in term time are disruptive to their children's learning. As a result of the school's policy on snacks, the healthy school meals, and the many opportunities for participation in sports, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They have a satisfactory awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils' improving social skills and their increased competence in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are providing a good basis for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with many outstanding features, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Year 6. In the Foundation Stage the teaching is well focused on meeting the needs of individual children, with many varied and interesting indoor and outdoor activities being provided to do this. These help children make excellent progress. In Year 6, and some other classes, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and work and these are reflected in

standards attained. The presentation of pupils' work is good, and the detailed marking in most books helps pupils understand what is required in order to progress further. Most teachers manage their pupils well and, as a result, behaviour in classrooms is generally good. Minor incidents of poor behaviour are usually dealt with well. The best teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons where teachers reinforce previous learning and then develop well the pupils' skills and knowledge. The brisk pace in these lessons ensures pupils stay fully involved and interested. Many teachers use questioning well to check and extend the pupils' learning, but sometimes this is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Teachers use high quality assessment and pupil tracking procedures very well to ensure that pupils can build effectively on what they learned previously.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. A good range of activities matches pupils' needs, particularly the very exciting and stimulating activities in the Foundation Stage which contribute very well to all learning areas. For example, children, captivated by the hatching of chicks, were keen to speak and learn new vocabulary about living things. In the rest of the school, the curriculum is planned well and allows pupils to progress smoothly with their learning. For example, much has been done to improve boys' achievement through specific teaching in small groups, counselling and a curriculum that is better matched to their needs. Subjects are not always linked together effectively to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills more consistently. This is planned for improvement. The curriculum is very well adapted for pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils benefit from effective, short sessions in support groups, so that they miss as little as possible of their class lesson. The school has recently introduced well prepared activities for more able pupils. For example, the recent 'Thinking skills' day gave these pupils the chance to try out challenging games and puzzles. This has now been extended into a regular lunch time club. The school promotes healthy and safe lifestyles well through an effective personal, social and health education programme. There is a good range of extra curricular clubs, with plenty of active participation in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very well organised systems underpin effective pastoral and academic care and guidance. Staff notice very quickly if a pupil is not doing as well as he or she should be and good support is given. The use of 'intensifying support programme' and the emphasis on pupils' targets helps them to have a good understanding of how to improve their work. Vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well to make the most of their time in school. The school liaises very successfully with outside agencies to complement the effective 'in house' support systems. Regularly reviewed child protection, first aid and health and safety procedures mean all pupils are safe and secure. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there are now few incidents of bullying and harassment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is a key factor in the school's remarkable improvement in the last two years. Despite very high staff turn-over and initial start-up difficulties, they have given an authoritative direction to the school's work and created a strong team approach. Staff, pupils and governors all share in trying to achieve the school's motto - 'Aiming High'. With good support from the local authority, they have developed outstanding systems for checking on how well the school is doing. They rapidly address what needs improving, for example, making teaching better and improving pupils' behaviour. This has improved pupils' achievement considerably. The school has worked hard to encourage parents to contribute their views, for example, through the Parents' Forum. Some key staff provide excellent leadership, for example, in the Foundation Stage. Some other subject leaders do not contribute sufficiently to improvements in teaching and learning, and the school has targeted this for improvement. The new governing body are contributing well to the school's development. They have benefited from good quality training and check carefully on how well the school is doing, for example, through the 'governor of the month' programme. Excellent systems, strong leadership and increasingly effective management put the school in an outstanding position to improve further.

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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	1	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	NA	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?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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	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	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 for being so friendly and making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. What we liked most about your school: - Mr. Day and Mr. Staples lead your new school excellently. They, together with the teachers and governors who run your school, are doing a good job. They provide an attractive school for you, with very good resources, and they want to make it even better. - Your teachers and other adults care about you as individuals, make sure that you are safe and listen to your opinions about school. - Most of you enjoy school, get on well together and behave well. - Teachers and other adults carefully check to see how well you are doing and try to ensure that lessons help you learn more. Some of the teaching is outstanding and we think that you learn well. - Your parents think it is a good school, and we agree. What we have asked the school to do now: - Teachers, particularly those who are responsible for particular subjects, to look carefully at each others' teaching to see if they can help you to achieve even better. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard.