

Ardleigh Green Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102271
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	286323
Inspection date	6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Felton
Headteacher	Mrs Cheryl Woodey
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001
School address	Ardleigh Green Road Hornchurch RM11 2SP
Telephone number	01708 449362
Fax number	01708 448832

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues -achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, leadership and management and care, guidance and support - gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff, also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This popular larger-than-average school serves a suburban mixed residential area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Less than one fifth of pupils are from different minority ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has awards for promoting basic skills and healthy lifestyles. It has its own outdoor swimming pool.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ardleigh Green is a good school with many outstanding features. The headteacher has a passion for education that she conveys through outstanding leadership. She is very ably supported by the deputy and other senior leaders. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities that are a little below average. Standards achieved at the end of Year 2 have consistently been above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This consistency is achieved as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, and a vibrant curriculum that interests and engages pupils well. Consequently, achievement is good. Parents are full of praise for the school and delighted at the progress their children are making. One wrote, 'My child loves school and can't wait to go every day.'

The school provides an outstanding level of care and guidance, which ensures pupils feel safe and secure and are able to flourish. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is outstanding. Teachers are given time each week to reflect upon the progress of these pupils, and to revise their individual education plans, ensuring that support is tailored exactly to their needs. The school has developed excellent assessment strategies using their own minimum standards, which ensure that teachers know each pupil's progress really well. Pupils are set curricular targets and are actively involved in assessing how well they are doing, through applying learning criteria to their work. For example, Year 2 pupils used a sentence key to check they were writing 'golden' sentences that were written well and used interesting vocabulary.

Because the teaching makes pupils think about their learning and is exciting, pupils are keen to participate in lessons and are enthusiastic about their work. They have especially good attitudes to learning, which result from the very positive relationships that exist in classrooms between pupils and staff. This means pupils are willing to 'have a go' and are not afraid of making mistakes. Their personal, social, moral and cultural development is excellent, treating one another with great respect and celebrating differences. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of other cultures and traditions, through participating in events such as Africa Week and India Week, and in drawing upon their own and others' experiences. The school council is very active, and is currently raising funds for a sensory garden by holding a toy sale. They have raised awareness of health and safety by organising a poster competition, with the winning entries on display as large collages in the school hall. Pupils know all about living healthily and take plenty of exercise. They feel free from bullying and say they would turn to an adult if they were worried. Attendance is above average, a great improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are involved in recycling and help younger pupils improve their reading skills in their role as reading tutors. Older pupils are also friendship monitors and buddies to Reception children. Pupils leave the school with well-developed basic skills and as confident learners, ready for the next stage of their education.

A parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'The teachers are very skilful at identifying the children's strengths and areas where they need more help.' Although it is a large school, it has the family atmosphere of a small school, with the pupils known as individuals. The curriculum is good and its outstanding enrichment contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent personal development and well-being and their tremendous enjoyment of school. An innovative alternative to registration in Year 1, known as 'decision-time', allows pupils to self-register using name tags and then choose an activity they would like to pursue that prepares them well for the learning of the day. There are good links across subjects, but some of the school's

computers are old and difficult to access, with too few computers in classes. This restricts the amount of time pupils have to practise on them. However, the recent purchase of data projectors has helped teachers to use information and communication technology in stimulating ways to introduce and conclude lessons. Pupils benefit from special themed weeks such as Book Week and visitors that include musicians, theatre groups and various owls.

Pupils benefit from similar high-quality learning experiences, whichever class they are in. Lessons are planned well so that teachers know exactly what they want pupils to learn. Teaching assistants are fully involved in this process and make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils individually and in groups. All children make good progress as a result of the consistently good teaching, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. A strength of the teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils discussed how to partition two-digit numbers in an interesting and purposeful way. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of their work and behaviour, but occasionally do not give pupils sufficient freedom to explore their ideas. For the large part, lessons are fun, with games and rhymes used to motivate and involve pupils.

Leaders have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and needs, born out of careful evaluation and effective, if sometimes informal, monitoring systems. This results in strategic plans that identify correctly the key areas for improvement, for example in ensuring that more pupils attain the higher levels in writing. A focus on developing gross motor skills in the Reception classes to promote early writing is proving successful. There are excellent links with other schools and agencies, especially with the junior school that shares the same site. Teachers share training and pupils from the junior school support those in the infant school. A senior leader described the school as 'always moving forward', which is possible because of the strong teamwork that exists amongst staff, and the inspirational leadership they receive from the headteacher. Governors are very supportive of the school and ask searching questions, as well as using their expertise to support its work. The school has maintained above average standards for many years, and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's personal and social skills are below expectations when they enter the Reception classes, but they soon learn to get on together because of the consistency of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 generally reaching the expected early learning goals. The curriculum is exciting and has a good mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teachers and support staff plan together and assess the children very well, building up a clear picture of their strengths and areas to improve. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Parents are delighted with how much their children enjoy coming to school. The school is aware of the need to create access for the children to the outdoor area, so that they can make full use of it directly from their classrooms. Usage is rather restricted at present.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide easier access for Reception children to the outdoor area from their classes so that they are able to benefit from this resource more.
- Update information and communication technology facilities so that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ardleigh Green Infant School, Hornchurch, RM11 2SP

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. It is a good school with some things about it that are very special, including YOU! Your behaviour is superb and you are very keen to learn. I was delighted to see how enthusiastic you are about your lessons. Here are some other things I like about your school:

- you really enjoy school and your attendance is good
- the teaching is good and the lessons are interesting and fun
- you do well in your studies and make good progress
- there are lots of exciting things for you to see and do from all the visits and visitors you enjoy
- the school cares for you really well, and knows what you need to do to get even better in your work
- the school is led and managed well by the headteacher and her staff
- you get to do lots of things with the junior school, which makes it easier for you to move when the time comes.

The Reception children settle into school quickly. It is a shame that they cannot get to the outdoor area directly from their classrooms. I have asked the school to see if it can raise the money to solve this problem. Your computers are a bit old now, and there are not many in your classrooms. I have said it would be helpful to buy some new ones and more of them so that you get plenty of time to use them.

I did enjoy my visit to your school. Thank you once again for your help. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N Butt,

Lead Inspector.