

The John Hampden School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110293
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288623
Inspection date	23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Jeffrey White

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	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Adrienne Laing
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Willis
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Wharf Road Wendover Aylesbury HP22 6HF
Telephone number	01296 622629
Fax number	01296 622701

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	23 March 2007
Inspection number	288623

© Crown copyright 2007

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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The very large majority of pupils are of White British origin. A very small number are of minority ethnic background. Few pupils take a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is much smaller than average but rising. The proportion with statements is above average. A number of pupils are from a nearby RAF base and often these pupils enter and leave the school at times different from the usual times of entry. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school succeeds in its mission to develop pupils who 'love to learn'. The outstanding leadership and management ensure that achievement and progress are excellent. At the end of Year 2, standards are much higher than the local and national averages and this has been the case for several years. The school had no significant issues to address from its last inspection but it has not just ticked over since then. It has improved considerably and it is very well placed to continue to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and are the key reasons why the climate for learning is so highly positive. The Foundation Stage provides a flying start to the pupil's education especially in developing their confidence and eagerness to learn. By the time pupils enter Year 1 they are well equipped to collaborate with others and to make choices in their learning.

In general, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They enjoy sharing their views and feel the headteacher and staff value them. Pupils talk very knowledgeably about how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 enjoy their learning enormously and are very excited by the highly stimulating curriculum, especially the very wide range of sporting and cultural opportunities. Pupils are very actively involved in community activities and events that include a range of opportunities, for example, carol singing, musical concerts and maypole dancing.

Pupils' outstanding learning is the result of excellent teaching that has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils of all abilities are supported very successfully by teachers and teaching assistants. Basic skills are taught very thoroughly and many pupils say that literacy and numeracy are their 'favourite subjects', although boys' writing skills lag behind those of the girls. Their acquisition of these important skills prepares them extremely well for their future life.

Outstanding care, guidance and support permeate the life of the school. A key strength is the guidance given to pupils to help them improve both their personal and academic performance. Pupils are very much aware of their targets for learning and comment very precisely on how they can 'get better'.

The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and her experienced senior leadership team and governors support her excellently. Links with parents are excellent. A parent's view that she could not 'praise the school highly enough' is typical of the views of so many, who are particularly pleased with their children's progress and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make further efforts to improve boys' writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' performance is analysed thoroughly and highly effective action is taken to remedy any weaknesses. This begins in the Foundation Stage and continues through the school. This is a key reason why pupils achieve as well as they do. An excellent example is the successful attention given to improving boys' writing by making it a whole school target. Their progress has quickened

and their standards have risen considerably, for instance, in Year 2, in the range of punctuation, and use of adverbs and adjectives. However, they still have some way to go to catch up with girls' literacy skills, which remains a key priority in the school improvement plan. Outstanding overall progress results in the exceptional standards, at the end of Year 2, in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities perform much better than similar pupils nationally because they are given excellent support. Pupils are extremely keen learners. They settle quickly to work and sustain their concentration.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Attendance is very good and indicates pupils' strong desire to learn. When sharing their knowledge of healthy eating pupils recall with great pleasure the school's 'healthy week' in which they had opportunity to work with a local chef. They also enthuse about the chance to improve their games skills developed with a local Football Club. Pupils value the very wide opportunities to share their views and are especially pleased that their suggestions are taken up, for example, in improvements to playground equipment. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes and their great enthusiasm for learning are helping to prepare them extremely well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The teachers' excellent promotion of pupils' personal and academic performance is typical of the teaching. Sustaining a climate in which pupils can give of their best and also learn how to improve is at the heart of what the teachers do extremely effectively. Lessons are planned thoroughly to take account of the range of pupils' needs but also to ensure that they participate actively. Discussion with pupils is exceedingly well managed and helps pupils to evaluate their work. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked about how they might improve their work in art and design. A teaching assistant gave pupils in Year 2 excellent help as they discussed their comprehension of a book they were reading together. Teaching in the Foundation Stage captures pupils' interests very well and not only enables pupils to make choices in their learning but also ensures they are learning key basic skills such as letter sounds.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the excellent curriculum. Links between subjects are strong, for example in science, ICT, and art. The curriculum contributes excellently to pupils' cultural development, for instance, in work on the Chinese New Year. Visitors to the school including artists, poets and musicians particularly enrich the curriculum. A highly significant feature of the curriculum is the attention given to developing pupils' personal development and well-being through circle times and class councils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is lively and interesting and provides an excellent range of indoor and outside activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils not only feel safe but also have the confidence to make choices in their learning. Pupils know to whom to turn if they have a problem. Several parents of pupils who have particular learning needs comment on how pleased they are with the care and support they receive. The rigorous tracking of pupils' progress ensures that those who need extra help are identified as early as possible. A highly distinctive feature of the school's care for is the outstanding development of pupils' awareness of their progress. For example, a pupil in Year 2, whose writing had improved, said 'I now need to extend my sentences'. Another said 'my handwriting is better but my spelling is not good enough'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and with the excellent support of governors and staff ensures that not only does the school run very smoothly but also there is a constant endeavour to provide the pupils with the best education possible. Valuing the individual child lies at the heart of the school's philosophy.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's work includes staff and governors so that everyone pulls in the same direction. Governors are highly aware of the school's strengths and the ways forward. They make focused visits to the school and their reports are evaluative and very helpful. The findings of the school's self-evaluation are followed speedily by very effective action, which improves pupils' achievement and standards, for example, in writing. The school's self-evaluation is linked very closely to teachers' professional development so that they are very placed to implement new approaches to developing pupils' learning. The views of parents are sought regularly and they are very supportive of the headteacher and staff.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Thank you very much for your help on my visit to your school. You have an excellent school and you told me how much you enjoy your work. I was particularly impressed with how much you know about your learning and that you know what to do to improve. Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on extremely well together. You make excellent progress and reach very high standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 2. Your headteacher and staff take great care of you and give you outstanding support in your learning. You know how to keep safe and you told me a lot about how to stay healthy. You also very much enjoy giving your views. Keep up your excellent work!

With best wishes

Jeff White

Lead Inspector