

Perryfields Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114924
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	290075
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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	173
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Stevens
Headteacher	Mrs June Gould
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002
School address	Lawn Lane Springfield Chelmsford Essex CM1 7PP
Telephone number	01245 268714
Fax number	01245 344296

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Perryfields is a smaller than average-sized infant school. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a small number represent a range of minority ethnic groups. Very few speak English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities form a lower proportion than is normally the case, although a tendency for this figure to vary significantly across year groups is apparent. Very few pupils are currently known to be eligible for a free school meal. Attainment on entry 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: 2

Leadership and management at Perryfields are good and include some outstanding arrangements for monitoring performance and establishing what needs to be done next. Self evaluation is therefore accurate and effective. This has ensured considerable improvement in this good school that is on a journey towards excellence. Some features are already outstanding. These findings match its view of itself. It provides good value for money. The headteacher has a particularly clear vision, which she communicates very effectively and which is shared strongly by all staff and governors. While many governors are new to their roles, they are effective in their support. They keep in close touch with developments, which provides them with the knowledge to ask pertinent questions about the school's performance. They also possess the skills and willingness to provide practical help when needed. Partnerships with other schools, colleges and agencies are good. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with what is provided for their children and staff involve them wholeheartedly in their children's learning.

Good teaching and learning, allied to an excellent, innovatory curriculum ensure that pupils' achievement is good. Pupils of all backgrounds and ability, including children in Reception, progress well. Those who have learning difficulties and disabilities often make exceptional progress towards their precisely written individualised targets. Such precision allows teachers and teaching assistants to provide just the right type of support to help these pupils. The quality of provision in Reception is good. By the end of the year, a high proportion of children reach, and some exceed the expected goals. National assessments at the end of Year 2 indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen rapidly in recent years. Results are often well above average and, in some respects, exceptional. In 2006, for example, in reading and writing, results were exceptionally high and many pupils attained levels above those normally expected. Results in mathematics, while still above average, were not as high. Good leadership has ensured a continuing focus on provision in this subject, as in others, so standards rise further. Indications from 2007 assessments, not yet finalised, are that achievement and progress remain strong, although standards are not quite as high as in 2006. This is largely because of a high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties. While this group of pupils has achieved exceptionally well, they have not, understandably, reached quite the same levels as other pupils.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding, which is adding much to pupils' personal development and well-being. This aspect, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also outstanding. In the Reception, children's personal, social and emotional development is an important strength. They fully enjoy engaging with tasks and learning, both in play situations or more formal settings. Throughout the school, behaviour is outstanding. Nearly all pupils are excited by their work and want to share their achievements. Recently, attendance has improved to a little above average. Pupils follow simple safety routines, knowing why it is important to do so and know much about healthy foods and taking exercise to keep fit. Pupils' contributions to school life through their School Council and many other ways are exceptionally wide ranging. Good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) mean that pupils are prepared well for life outside school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain its focus on mathematics, reviewing and further developing provision where necessary, so standards in this subject rise to levels that match those in reading and writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and is rising throughout the school, owing to good rates of progress. The school's targets are challenging and being met successfully. Currently, towards the end of Year 2, work is above average, although many pupils achieve very highly in writing. This is because the school's innovative curriculum is taught well. Inspirational themes, such as 'Pirates' or 'Robin Hood', encourage pupils to write enthusiastically and to make flexible and creative use of words. Reading skills are also good. Work on display suggests that pupils' knowledge of other subjects is also frequently above what is normally expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make excellent progress. Their targets are well defined and supporting adults are knowledgeable in offering guidance, so pupils are clear about what to do to make fast progress. In 2006, results of assessments were very high, especially in reading and writing. While trends in mathematics indicate considerable improvement, standards here do not quite match those of other core subjects. However, the subject leader has successfully focused several aspects of learning and further improvement is underway.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is outstanding. They are confident, have very positive attitudes, and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school. Attendance is above average, reflecting the fact that pupils enjoy school immensely. They have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy and fit, and talk readily about balanced eating and participation in the variety of physical education activities on offer. Pupils feel very safe in school and know that there is someone they can turn to if in difficulty. They make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their work on the School Council, and to the wider community through raising money for charity. They acquire very good team skills through participation in various clubs, community events, and activities such as selling fruit and vegetables grown in the school's own allotments. This gives them excellent grounding for the next stage of schooling and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Planning is typically strong, based as it is on an exceptionally well-designed curriculum. This is seen from Reception to Year 2. As a result, teachers display much enthusiasm about what they teach. Lessons are pacy and pupils engage excitedly with themes that offer interesting ideas on which to base their learning and consequent acquisition of skills. While pupils receive much ongoing feedback about their work, this does not consistently refer to learning targets. The link with how to improve is then less clear than it might otherwise be. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is exceptionally strong, so they make outstanding progress towards their targets. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are identified and their needs met effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and provides a very wide range of interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. It is innovative with its approach to link different subjects creatively through very careful planning. This enhances pupils' achievements very effectively. Enrichment weeks, such as 'music, art, dance and drama week' or 'feeling fine week', and events such as the local music festival bring much variety to learning. Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well, as are the basic skills in all subjects. The curriculum has been reviewed and adapted particularly effectively in the past couple of years in order to meet pupils' needs and to improve impact through the use of themes. A very clear focus on improving mathematics has increased pupils' progress very effectively, although not yet to quite the standards achieved in reading and writing. Programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties are particularly well planned.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care and welfare of pupils is outstanding and central to the school's work. There is a high level of commitment to pupils' well-being and a real sense of them being individually important. Involvement of parents and students in the classrooms is highly beneficial in ensuring care both academically and personally, increasing the presence of adult support. Effective systems for safeguarding children are in place and rigorously applied to cover health and safety, child protection and all kinds of risk assessments. Strong and highly productive links with a wide range of agencies support pupils with learning difficulties and address the care of vulnerable pupils effectively. In Reception, children receive strong support in several ways, including that provided by skilful support staff. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and monitored, so staff know exactly what they need to do to plan pupils' next steps for learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides an exceptionally clear direction and purpose to what the school offers. This is supported well by an able deputy headteacher and other leaders. Governors are also supportive, although many have only recently joined the governing body, so are still not fully conversant with their role. Nevertheless, they have all undertaken recent training and are very willing to contribute their wide ranging skills and to ask good strategic questions. Provision in the Reception class is well managed, as is that for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. An outstanding feature is the effectiveness with which provision is monitored and findings evaluated in order to realise continuing improvement. Seen in the context of recent rapid improvements, this indicates that the capacity to improve further is excellent.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	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	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	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?	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 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	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

28 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Perryfields Infant School, Chelmsford, CM1 7PP

Thank you for being very polite and helpful when Mrs Arora and I visited your school. It was excellent to hear so many of you tell us that you enjoy school a lot. I enjoyed my meeting with the school councillors and hearing their excellent ideas for the school and their opinions about how good it is. We agree with them that your school is good and we think that parts of it are excellent. For example, the themes that you study, such as 'Pirates', make everything very interesting for you. Your work in reading and writing is often excellent. Although it is not quite as good in mathematics, it is still good.

Here are some more things that we like about your school.

- Your teachers and classroom staff teach you well and look after you outstandingly well.
- Lots of your work on display is very good. It helps to show you how good your work can get.
- Your behaviour is exceptionally good.
- What you do for each other and for your teachers around the school, as well as your willingness to take part in fund-raising and other events, are excellent.
- Your school is well led and managed and is continuing to improve quickly.

What I have asked your headteacher, the staff and the school's governors to do next.

- Keep working very hard on mathematics (you can help by doing the same). This will help you to do just as well in this subject as you do in reading and writing.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy going to school and that you will always be proud of what it does for you.

Yours sincerely John W. Paull (Lead inspector)