



# Northlands Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 114995  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290099  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Nichola Perry

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Winifred Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Pitsea, Pitsea
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7		Basildon, Essex SS13 3JQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 553434
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	212	<b>Fax number</b>	01268 450594
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joyce Backham
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanna Bamford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average school serving an area of significant social deprivation. The school has above average proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below levels expected for their age. A significant number of pupils join the school part way through their education. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number speak 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

This is a good school with outstanding care, guidance and support of pupils and excellent links with other agencies. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and this is a key factor in the school's growing success. Personal development is good. Relationships are excellent. Pupils love coming to school and, as they become more confident learners, increasingly enjoy the challenge in their learning. Behaviour is good and well managed by all adults. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils, especially for vulnerable pupils and their families, are outstanding and parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. Academic guidance is strong. Regular conferences with teachers to assess learning and agree targets for improvement ensure that pupils are involved in their own learning. Systems for ensuring pupils' safety are robust and regularly reviewed. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They show a good understanding of how to eat sensibly, stay healthy and keep fit.

Pupils get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Early reading, writing and number skills are taught rigorously and although pupils achieve well, standards remain below those expected in aspects of literacy and numeracy by the end of the Reception year. Pupils make good progress as they move further up the school so that standards by Year 2 are broadly average in the key subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement overall is good in relation to their low starting points. However, there are too few pupils attaining the higher levels reflecting the high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and the high numbers of pupils who join the school part way through their education, some having experienced disruption to their schooling.

Teaching, learning and support are good. Planning across the school is effective, caters well for the range of learners and shows high expectations of pupils' performance. Feedback to pupils is very good and ongoing assessment and tracking of all pupils' progress ensures that individuals and groups of pupils are quickly identified and targeted with appropriate work and support. This is a key factor in pupils' ongoing good achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team, ably supported by key subject leaders, is constantly seeking ways to increase pupils' achievement and improve the quality of education provided. The curriculum is good, relevant to pupils' needs and effectively supplemented by a good range of additional activities and excellent use of the local environment. It now benefits from a flexible approach to linking subjects to key skills development and improved provision of information and communication technology (ICT). The school has some way to go to make use of the full potential of both of these initiatives. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. The governing body has improved rapidly and is now at least satisfactory. Recruitment is no longer an issue; governors are very supportive and now work closely with the school to monitor and evaluate performance. Finances are managed well to provide good value for money. Whilst attendance is still below average, figures show consistent improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has good capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce further new strategies to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics so that more pupils attain the higher levels.
- Use ICT more consistently to improve teaching and learning in all subjects.
- Establish further links across subjects to maximise and reinforce the progressive learning of key skills.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Stage pupils learn rapidly and their achievement is good, especially in the development of personal, social, language and communication skills. Although standards remain below average by the end of the Reception year, there has been improvement in the numbers of pupils achieving the early learning goals because of the ongoing focus on these areas. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good and they attain average standards, although writing remains the weakest area. This has been the trend over the past three years. The school has introduced a range of new ideas to promote greater enthusiasm for writing and evaluation shows that pupils' confidence has increased as a result. The new computer suite has contributed to pupils developing a good range of skills in ICT and they use computers confidently. High numbers of pupils with learning difficulties are supported in all year groups and staff ensure that the significant numbers of pupils arriving at various times throughout the year, some with learning difficulties, limited language or no schooling, are not disadvantaged.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and work together well. Behaviour is good in lessons and about the school and is managed well by adults. Attendance, although just below the national average, has improved significantly since the previous inspection due to the school's unrelenting action to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly. Pupils demonstrate good levels of responsibility when acting as 'play leaders' at break-times, helping others and supervising equipment. The school council members offer suggestions to improve daily life and the school acts upon these, as in making the playground improvements. Pupils also enjoy raising money for various charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and maintains the standards in the previous inspection. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and enjoy learning about cultures different from their own. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The introduction of daily targeted groups, at regular intervals, supports and extends learning in reading, writing and mathematics, and is particularly effective in motivating pupils and helping them achieve well. The use of highly skilled teaching assistants in teaching these groups contributes to the good progress made by pupils of all abilities. All staff work extremely hard to motivate pupils. They make learning enjoyable and stimulating and pupils become increasingly confident to contribute because of the high expectations of teachers and because their contributions are valued. Teachers have begun to use the interactive white boards, but have yet to realise their full potential in bringing learning to life. Consistent management of behaviour is being supported by the introduction of 'thinking skills'. This is helping pupils to develop good listening and good learning, although several pupils in all year groups still struggle with this aspect of learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There is due emphasis on the key areas of literacy and numeracy and better links with other subjects to make learning more meaningful. The improved provision begins in the Nursery and is extended to meet the increasing range of pupils' needs as they pass through the school. The curriculum is supported by a good range of clubs and other activities which support academic learning as well as sporting and musical development. The school makes excellent use of local visits to increase pupils' experiences. Resources are good and are used well to enrich pupils' learning. Staff are linking subjects together creatively to focus on basic skills development, whilst making learning even more stimulating and raising standards further. Provision for ICT has been significantly improved with the new computer suite and staff are increasingly using it to enhance learning. However, this and the linking of subjects to reinforce key skills are not yet fully embedded.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

These aspects of the school's work are outstanding. All adults go to great lengths to encourage good behaviour and good academic achievement. Pupils have clear targets and are aware of how these help them to improve their work. They receive clear guidance on how to stay safe and look after themselves. Particularly outstanding are the levels of care and support given to the significant proportion of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff and other adults provide excellent role models. The considerable efforts made by the school have improved the previously weak relationships with pupils' families and have increased the enjoyment

and general well-being of pupils. Parents are very appreciative and have greater confidence in the school as evident in their positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Risk assessments and systems for ensuring pupils safety are robust and regularly reviewed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher cares deeply about the welfare and achievement of all her pupils. Her drive for improvement is unrelenting. She has established an effective senior leadership team and has made good use of external support to develop their skills. Subject leaders are similarly committed and have a clear understanding of their leadership roles. They all work together well and are not fearful of change or challenge. Governors are now an improving team as a result of the headteacher's coaching and training. Parents are now very supportive and increasingly want to be a part of the school, either as governors or by attending workshops. All work as an effective team, evidenced by the recent evaluation day where they produced a new style strategic plan. The school analyses its performance carefully at all levels to identify any areas for improvement and takes rapid action to improve things: for example, the introduction of more frequent pupil tracking to ensure support groups are being effective; changes to the way literacy is taught so that learning is more focused; and assessment in the Nursery so that learning is broken down further to show how pupils are making progress. The school is well placed for future improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	3
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

11 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Northlands Infant and Nursery School, Winifred Road, Pitsea, Basildon, Essex, SS13 3JQ

We thoroughly enjoyed our short visit to your school. Thank you very much for being so helpful in answering our questions, showing us your work and helping us when we got lost.

We think you make good progress in your learning and your teachers help you to become confident and responsible young people. Pupils in the Nursery and in the Reception year are given a good start to their time in school. Those of you who need extra help with your English language, learning or behaviour are very well cared for and your parents are very pleased with the school.

Most of your lessons are really good and your teachers make them fun as well as interesting. They plan activities that help you all learn well but we would like your teachers to keep helping you to reach higher standards in reading and mathematics and especially in your writing. We have asked your teachers to teach you more writing or maths in other subjects so that you get more practice and get even better. We were also really impressed with the way you work in the small groups each day. It's a pity that not all of you attend school regularly because if you don't come to school, you can't learn well.

Mrs Bamford has made a really good job of improving the computer suite so that you can all use computers. We would like to see you use these more in lots of your lessons and in different subjects. Your new family room, where Mr Manuel and I were working, is super.

Good luck for the future.

Best wishes to you all

Nichola Perry

Lead Inspector