

Harewood Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115491
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	290240
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Harlow HMI

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	195
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Karen Howard
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Harewood Close Tuffley Gloucester GL4 0SS
Telephone number	01452 526889
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Harewood Infant School is situated on the south side of the city of Gloucester, on a shared site with Harewood Junior School. Most children are of White British heritage. Very few children from minority ethnic families are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of children with learning difficulties is average. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is low. Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is generally a little lower than that of typical four-year-olds. A significant number of children start school with language and communication difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Harewood is a wonderful school'. This is the view of many parents and they are right! It is indeed a good school with many outstanding features; an educational oasis where children thrive and adults want to be. Excellent relationships are at the heart of this vibrant community. Without exception, all adults work hard to make a difference for the better to the children's lives at school. The care for children is excellent. As a result of the school's many significant strengths, children achieve well and their personal development is quite outstanding. Children start at school with a little catching up to do, particularly in communication and language in which their skills are often underdeveloped. They get off to a flying start in the Reception classes and make good progress. In Years 1 and 2 children's learning continues to move on at a swift pace. They achieve good standards by the end of Year 2 although they do better in reading and writing than in mathematics, particularly at the higher levels. Children with learning difficulties make good progress due to the excellent support they receive. Teaching is always good and at times outstanding. That said, mathematical tasks are not always challenging enough for some children. The school has worked hard to make the curriculum creative and imaginative; and it is. Indeed, the children are provided with excellent experiential learning opportunities which capture their interest and excite them to learn. The extensive range of enrichment activities is impressive and does much to stimulate and inspire the children's thirst for learning. 'I am very impressed with the headteacher and the teachers', wrote a parent. This too is accurate. Leadership and management of the school, including the governance, are outstanding at all levels. The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to make it even better. It provides good value for money and has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging opportunities for children to apply their mathematical skills in order to raise standards at the higher levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Standards are just above average in mathematics. In the Reception classes, the rapid development in children's personal and social skills, including the constant focus on improving spoken language, ensures good progress. This successful beginning means that they enter Year 1 with at least the expected level of attainment in all areas of learning, although they still lack confident speaking and listening skills. Over the course of Years 1 and 2, children continue to make good progress, especially in reading and writing. National assessments clearly illustrate the school's effectiveness in these subjects with standards being significantly above average. The good speaking skills of Year 2 children and the liveliness of their writing come from the many chances for discussion in all classes and the extensive opportunities for them to write. Results in mathematics, although just above the national average, are lower than in English. The school has, quite rightly, placed a greater emphasis on challenging children to explore different ways of solving mathematical problems with the intention of increasing the number who reach the higher levels. This is already bearing fruit in lessons, although the school is aware that it still has a little way to go.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Without exception children enjoy school and flourish in this happy and harmonious community. They are delightful and refreshingly open in conversation, showing a highly developed sense of respect and care for others. Attendance is slightly above the national average and improving due to the sensitive work of the school, particularly the learning mentor. Behaviour is exemplary. The children move calmly and sensibly in class and cooperate extremely well in paired discussions and group tasks. Around the school they invariably stand back for visitors and greet them with a warm, friendly smile. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They benefit from a wealth of opportunities designed to cultivate these aspects, for example, the poignant assemblies where moral issues feature strongly and the children sing with gusto. Displays of children's work are outstanding and do much to promote their self-esteem. Children demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of eating a healthy lunch and participating in exercise. They feel safe in school and know there is a 'buddy' to turn to if they feel sad. The children's voice really matters in this school and their views are sought through the popular class and school councils. Their contributions make a difference, for example, recent improvements in resources for playground games which they enjoy. Children are developing good basic skills that prepare them for the next school and later life. One thoughtful child said in discussion, 'You must work hard to get a good job' and when asked what they, the children, enjoyed at school many replied spontaneously, 'I like writing, maths and ICT.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is always good and often aspects are outstanding. Planning and preparation are excellent and lively teaching is rewarded by children's attentiveness, enthusiasm and hard work. Visits and practical activities give a 'real' and creative meaning to the children's work such as the trip to Eastnor Castle and the chance for children to observe live birds of prey in school. Very importantly, these experiences are also used successfully to teach basic skills. There are constant opportunities for discussion, as a whole class or with a partner. Visual resources, including information and communication technology, are expertly used to generate ideas. In the best lessons, children are given the time to consider their answers very carefully and demanding questions are skilfully targeted at different ability groups. In all classes warm, encouraging relationships invite children of all abilities to respond spontaneously and check instructions when they do not understand. Without exception, the support staff make an impressive contribution to the children's learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties. The level of challenge for the more able is usually about right, particularly in English. Nevertheless, mathematical tasks are not always sufficiently openended or challenging enough for children capable of achieving higher levels. Sometimes, teachers jump in too quickly with an explanation rather than exploring children's ideas in more depth. Work is marked regularly, but written feedback is more thorough in English than mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The quality of the curriculum and enrichment activities is outstanding. Thoughtful, meticulous planning underpins an imaginative and innovative curriculum which meets the needs of young learners very well. Every effort is made to provide the children with practical, creative experiences which stimulate their thirst for learning. Interesting initiatives encourage reflection, such as 'Feeling Flowers', and the range of artistic activities planned to deepen the children's appreciation of different cultures is impressive. Excellent use is made of visits and visitors to whet the children's appetite for learning and these are carefully planned. Topics are evaluated by both the children and their parents/carers; their opinions are taken seriously and moreover influence future development. One parent wrote, 'Yet again another excellent, well planned and thought out theme. Love the way you make use of so many differing ways to make learning fun and interesting', which indeed it is. The provision for children with learning difficulties is good and the range of intervention strategies is having success. Very good links are made across subject areas and, having seen the benefits of this in English, the school is strengthening links in mathematics even further. The integration of information and communication technology into all aspects of the curriculum is enhancing the children's learning. A significant number of children participate in the impressive range of after school clubs on offer, for example karate, Irish dancing, drama, musical and sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This strong school community knows its children very well indeed and has excellent arrangements in place to ensure their welfare and well-being. Parents are full of praise for the care their children receive and delighted by the progress they make. Assessment and tracking procedures are thorough and the children know their targets for English and mathematics. These are regularly reviewed. Parents too, are kept informed. One wrote, 'Feedback seems top priority; we are fully involved in the learning process'. Another commented, 'What a lovely idea Friday morning is when parents can visit their child's class to see their work', and they do, in large numbers. The school has appropriate systems to ensure the safeguarding of children and robust assessment of risk when planning for school visits. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Supervision of entry and departure to the school is diligent and every effort is being made to monitor and improve the pedestrian and vehicular routines for access to this narrow entrance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by an energetic and visionary senior team, ensures that the school not only builds upon its successes and special qualities but moves forwards at a swift pace. The needs of the children are at the heart of all decision making, and consultation with the whole school community is central to its *raison d'être*. All members are valued equally; as a result there is an infectious team spirit. The administration and support staff are of a high quality and make a real difference for the better to the lives of the children in school. Communication with parents is excellent; it is open and genuine and concerns raised are dealt with immediately. The school's systems for checking on its improvements are rigorous

and leaders at all levels including governors are keenly aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation is honest and accurate and there is no room for complacency. The governors are committed and hard-working; they challenge and support exceptionally well and in a sensitive manner.

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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
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	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?	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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2
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?	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	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	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

I am writing to say thank you very much for giving the inspectors such a warm welcome. We were impressed with the way you greeted us with warm, friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work and hearing about the exciting things you do. What delightful children you are! Your school is so good in many ways. Here are some of the special things that it does very well indeed: Your school looks after you and all the adults want to do their best for you. Your behaviour is excellent and everyone in the school cares for each other. In the Reception classes, you get off to a flying start in all aspects of your learning. Years 1 and 2 children do well in reading and writing and mathematics. Your teachers plan exciting, lively, imaginative activities for you which make you enjoy school. There are lots of clubs which you find fun. Your headteacher and all the adults are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! They value your views and those of your parents and carers in helping them to do this. You are lucky to have such a wonderful headteacher, fantastic teachers and superb support staff. We have asked them to make sure that you achieve the same high standards of work in mathematics as you do in English. It was a real pleasure to visit Harewood Infant School. Keep up the excellent work and most importantly continue to enjoy your learning! Best wishes and thank you all again.