

# Hertford Heath Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117125
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290731
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Manuel

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	203
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Carter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janice Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2002
<b>School address</b>	Woodland Road Hertford Heath Hertford Hertfordshire SG13 7QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 583622
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 901871

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector for one day.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are above average and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average and one pupil has a statement for their needs. Skill levels on entry vary with some year groups being at expected levels and others being below or well below expected levels.

## 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 some outstanding features. A key feature is the good leadership of the headteacher and the strong support by all members of staff within the school's 'collaborative leadership' structure. In almost three years since her appointment, the headteacher has established a vibrant learning environment which ensures that all pupils achieve well in most subjects. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They become confident learners who love their school and are very proud of their achievements. Pupils develop a good range of important skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). These skills provide them with a good basis for their future economic well-being. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants provide particularly good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to stay healthy and safe from danger.

The youngest children settle quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes and develop early social skills well; some are very insecure but gain in confidence. By the end of the Reception year, most achieve the early learning goals expected at this age. Pupils continue to achieve well and in the current Year 2, standards are above expected levels in reading and mathematics and at average levels in writing. In the national tests in 2006, Year 6 pupils reached standards that were significantly above the national average in mathematics and science, while standards in English were average due to lower levels in writing. New strategies were introduced immediately to improve writing skills. Some progress has been made this year but further improvement is still needed. The current Year 6 pupils are working at above expected levels in science and at expected levels in English and mathematics. This group has a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, over one-third, so their good achievement from levels well below average at the end of Year 2, is particularly commendable.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well and have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Lessons are made interesting, and at times exciting, with good links between subjects. This was very evident in Year 2 when pupils were learning about the plague in history and literacy. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Pupils are given many good opportunities to reflect on important issues, such as respect for each other. They make good contributions to the school community and to the community beyond.

The leadership and management of the school are good. A real success is the strong teamwork and commitment by staff. They are all involved in shaping the school improvement plan which helps focus on the most important priorities for development. As a result of the school's strategies, pupils receive a high quality all round education. Governors provide good support and are fully aware of, and involved in, the priorities facing the school. Finances are managed well, and learning resources and the skills of staff are utilised to the full. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that current strategies to improve pupils' performance in writing are maintained so that standards in English are consistent with other subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress during their time in the school. This is because of the positive and stimulating learning environment which has been created. Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception from a range of starting points and most reach expected levels by the end of Reception. In national tests for pupils in Year 2 in the past two years, pupils have made good progress from their low starting points to reach average levels. The current Year 2 pupils achieve well and standards in reading and mathematics are above expected levels and in writing are at expected levels. In the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2005 and 2006, results were significantly above the national average overall. In mathematics and science they were exceptionally high and in English they were in line with the national average. This discrepancy was due to the lack of pupils gaining the higher level 5. The school responded to this by producing plans to raise standards in English, particularly in writing. As a result of the school's efforts, better progress is being made by pupils. In the current Year 6, there is a higher than normal proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. These pupils have achieved particularly well from their starting points which were well below average at Year 2.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy their school immensely and participate keenly in lessons and other activities. Pupils behave exceptionally well and show great respect for adults and each other. Attendance is above average as the school continues to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. Pupils develop an exceptional awareness of how to lead safe and healthy lives with good knowledge of diets and much participation in sport. Older pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good levels of responsibility by looking after younger pupils in Year 3 to help them settle in the upper school. The school council is actively involved in decision making, such as providing better equipment at playtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All these elements are enhanced by an enriched curriculum and through a wide range of visitors and visits. Pupils are regularly involved in local community events and supporting different charities. The school has been linked with a school project helping children in Ghana. Pupils are very well equipped socially and academically for the next stage of education and for later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well, have high expectations of pupils and motivate them well. Pupils of all abilities are challenged at their respective levels and this helps them make good progress in learning. Teachers generate enthusiasm for learning new skills using a range of successful strategies and resources, including interactive whiteboards. Teachers are also focussing on improving levels of writing. The impact of this focus can be seen but there is still more work to do in this area. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and this successful team work is particularly effective in supporting pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties. Detailed records are kept of pupils' progress and this information is used effectively to identify the next levels that each pupil or group should achieve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's curriculum is outstanding. There is a proper focus on the key areas of literacy and numeracy and this is balanced with excellent provision for other subjects. This balance includes a cycle of curriculum topics involving art, history, geography and science, where pupils appreciate very meaningful links between subjects. Topic weeks, visits to a range of museums and exhibitions and visitors to the school all help to create a thriving learning atmosphere. French is also included in the curriculum and specialist music teaching has been introduced. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and after school clubs is greatly enjoyed and appreciated by pupils and helps prepare them very well for the next stage of their education. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good balance of taught activities and opportunities for children to be independent and choose for themselves.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and have a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and academic achievement. Pupils say they feel very safe and happy in school and are confident that someone will help them if they are worried. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are fantastic, especially if you get stuck.' They confirm that there is no real bullying. All arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are very effective. Pupils receive exceptionally good guidance and have very clear targets to aim for. This helps them understand what they need to do to reach the next levels in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported particularly well so that they have good self esteem and make at least the expected levels of progress and frequently more. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has been very successful in establishing an environment that is based on doing everything possible to ensure that excellence and enjoyment is paramount in the life of the school. All staff work together well to help pupils achieve their best. There is a strong commitment to school improvement and a clear understanding of what should be done, as shown in the current priority to improve writing skills. This commitment has been very influential in the good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are very supportive and regularly involved in evaluating progress and measuring the success of the school. The vast majority of parents are very supportive and are very pleased with the education provided for their children. As one parent commented, 'There is a caring family atmosphere, a commitment to developing each child's abilities and a love of learning.'

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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	<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?	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	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	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<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>	1
<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.



## Annex A

**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	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**

15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Hertford Heath Primary and Nursery School, Woodland Road, Hertford, SG13 7QW

I would like to thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed looking at your work and talking to you.

I believe that you go to a very caring school where your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well. All staff are working very hard to help you to make good progress in your learning. Your teachers prepare very interesting lessons and you clearly enjoy them greatly. You are doing well in most subjects and appreciate the way subjects are linked together in your lovely curriculum.

I was very impressed by the way that you behave in lessons and at playtimes. I was also very pleased to find out that through your school council you have helped make improvements in the school. You also carry out lots of jobs to help the teachers, and look after the playtime equipment. Your hard work and excellent behaviour are helping you all to make good progress in your learning.

I have asked your teachers to continue to help you improve your English skills. You are all busy trying hard to improve your writing skills and I have asked teachers to keep this up so that English skills are as high as those in mathematics, science and ICT.

I wish you every success in the future and feel sure that your school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

David Manuel

Lead Inspector