

Heather Avenue First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120916
Local Authority	NORFOLK
Inspection number	291909
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Wigg
Headteacher	Mrs S Bream-Hardy
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Heather Avenue Hellesdon Norwich Norfolk NN6 6LT
Telephone number	01603 426438
Fax number	01603 402673

Age group	4-8
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Inspection number	291909

© 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 one Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school. Pupils are mainly White and of British background. There are smaller than average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and from minority ethnic groups. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils find learning more difficult, but in the present Year 2 a higher than average percentage has learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). One pupil has a statement of special educational need. There has been a drop in numbers and a reduction in teaching staff since the school was last inspected as the school is due to become an infant school from September 2007. A new headteacher was appointed in November 2004. The assistant headteacher was absent from August 2006 until June 2007. A private nursery is accommodated in a classroom that the school no longer needs. The school's work has been recognised by the International Award, Healthy Schools Status, Arts Mark and Active Mark.

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. It has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Since the arrival of the new headteacher in November 2004, the school has maintained better stability. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve further. Parents are very positive about the provision that the school makes for their children and there is a thriving, supportive 'friends' association. The school's success is underpinned by its good leadership and management.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, although it is a little modest about its strongest features. The process of self-evaluation involves all those that it should and is successful in identifying the right priorities for further development. The improvement plan drives development well, but as its criteria against which success is judged are not always measurable, it is not possible to evaluate the full impact of developments. Records used for measuring the progress that pupils make are paper-based and retrieval of information is rather time-consuming.

Excellent links with the nursery on its site mean that pupils quickly settle in Reception. They arrive with the knowledge and skills broadly typical of children of their age although groups vary quite considerably from year to year. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make effective progress and achieve well, and this continues throughout the school, because teaching is good. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and suitable action taken if individuals are falling behind. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early on and good support is provided for them. At present, standards in Year 3 are well above average. Standards in mathematics are particularly high in the school, because the headteacher has led well the development of a structured approach to teaching that is consistently and effectively implemented by all staff. Standards in reading are also very high. In writing, standards are below those in mathematics and reading. The school has recognised this and has recently implemented a programme to address it; already there are signs that pupils' progress is accelerating.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because the provision encourages these exceptionally well and the school has excellent links with others to ensure that pupils have all the support that they need. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils greatly enjoy the wealth of learning opportunities that the school provides. The curriculum is exceptionally rich, with an excellent number of extra-curricular clubs for a small first school. It gives pupils a good understanding of healthy living and physical activities are popular. Pupils are also taught well how to stay safe. There are outstanding opportunities to contribute to school life and pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They have an exceptionally strong voice and influence on school life through their democratically elected school council. Pupils leave the school with very high standards in basic skills, and exceptionally well developed skills in working with others in groups or teams. They also have a strong grasp of basic economic principles. Outstanding transition arrangements mean that Year 3 pupils approach the move with great confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that these become as high as the standards in reading and mathematics.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by:
 - - using information and communication technology (ICT) to record attainment and measure pupils' progress and

- - ensuring that criteria against which success is judged in the improvement plan are measurable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Whatever their starting points, all pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning. Pupils with learning difficulties, special educational needs or English as an additional language make equally good progress because they are well supported.

In Year 2, standards overall are average. A third of this group has learning difficulties or special educational needs, particularly in literacy. Although standards in reading are average, they are well below average in writing. Nonetheless, the school's assessment information shows that pupils have made good progress in writing. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are well above average. The school's success in mathematics is linked to a good consistent approach to the teaching of the subject. Standards in ICT have risen since the last inspection because the provision for this subject has improved.

Standards in Year 3 have been consistently above or well above average each year since the last inspection, and this year they are well above average. Standards in mathematics and reading are highest. Pupils particularly enjoy the weekly 'big writing' sessions, which are accelerating progress in this skill.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in good attendance. School rules, including those suggested by the school council, are exceptionally well respected and behaviour is excellent. Pupils are tolerant of differences and develop an excellent understanding of other religions, cultures and customs, particularly through 'international awareness' weeks. They get on very well together in the playground, which is a hive of physical activity as pupils make full use of all the equipment and apparatus. They make healthy eating choices and know well how to keep safe. There is an exceptionally wide range of ways in which pupils contribute, as monitors, playground 'buddies', school council members, fund-raisers for charities at home and abroad, eco-rangers, performers in the choir and mini-orchestra or growers of vegetables for healthy snacks. They develop excellent skills in getting on and working with others, and their high levels of basic skills and thorough understanding of simple economics prepares them exceptionally well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The teaching and learning policy guides teachers well and is implemented faithfully. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and show that they value them. This leads to pupils being confident learners. Lessons are well planned to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' levels of ability. Pupils understand why they are working in certain groups and say that the work is 'just right', although a few say that they

would like more difficult tasks to do if they finish their work before the end of a lesson. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and they are clear about what they are learning and what they need to do. They are well involved later on in assessing how confident they are in carrying out the tasks associated with new learning. In the best practice, good feedback is given throughout the lesson, such as acknowledgement that a pupil has just reached a target. Teachers make effective use of ICT in teaching, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding as it is exceptionally rich. All required subjects are taught and subjects are linked together to make topics that are meaningful and enjoyable for pupils. For instance, as part of a topic on Egyptians, pupils learned about forces and levers by making a model of a shaduf. Learning is also brought to life through visits related to topics. Music is a particular strength. Pupils learn to play an instrument as well as perform in a range of groups. Themed weeks develop well pupils' global and cultural awareness. An excellent range of lunchtime and after-school clubs adds to the variety and gives pupils many opportunities to develop interests as well as physical and social skills. A strong programme of personal, social and citizenship education enables pupils to learn most effectively about relationships and how society works. The teaching of mathematics in groups of similar ability is successful in ensuring that the highest possible standards are reached in this subject.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. Pupils' pastoral care has a high priority and daily staff briefings ensure that they are well informed about individuals' circumstances. Staff are well trained in matters of health and welfare, and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school and have someone to turn to, including 'buddies'. Staff track pupils' progress carefully and intervene to support where necessary. Pupils are given excellent guidance about how to improve. They are involved in setting personal targets in the main subjects, and writing targets is developed in all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, pupils know what they need to do to improve. There is also good ongoing verbal feedback and marking is helpful. Workshops for parents have helped them to support pupils in doing homework. Support for children entering Reception, moving up a class and into middle school is excellent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. The headteacher has a clear vision, high expectations and is well respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents. High standards have been maintained despite some staffing changes. The skills of staff are systematically developed in areas where the need for improvement has been identified. For instance, all teaching staff have been trained in the new writing programme and support staff are being trained. Teaching staff have leadership roles and they fulfil these well. For example, subject leaders monitor provision and standards in their subjects. However, the paper records of pupils' progress make the latter process rather time consuming. Governance

is good and has improved since the last inspection. Governors are most supportive and carry out checks on the work of the school. Good improvement is secured by implementing the development plan, although this does not always offer measurable criteria against which success can be evaluated. For example, 'improved standards in writing' is not precise enough.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	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	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?	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	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

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heather Avenue First School, Norwich, NR6 6LT

Thank you for making me welcome in your school, especially to those who spoke to me about school life. I really enjoyed the day. I came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there are any things that could be improved.

I agree with you that yours is a good school! You are making effective progress in your work because the teachers are doing a good job and you work hard in lessons. You told me that you all enjoy school very much and I am not surprised because there are so many enjoyable things to do. You are very lucky to have so many visits, exciting international weeks and clubs to join. I was pleased to be able to listen to the pupils practising playing belle plates at lunchtime, and wish that I could have heard some of the many other musical performers too.

I was most impressed by your behaviour, which is excellent. Your attendance is good too. It was good to see how much you enjoy the playground with all the apparatus and equipment that keep you fit.

The school council really has done a lot to make the school a better place for you. Your suggestions have been taken very seriously. I was pleased to see you making healthy eating choices at lunchtime and to hear that you feel safe in school and have someone to turn to if you have a problem. You certainly have a lot of jobs to do in school as monitors, buddies or school councillors, and you do these really well. You are also helping others by raising funds for them. You are learning about buying and selling and know how to get on well with others and work in teams so you will have a great chance of getting a good job when you grow up.

Teachers are going to keep records of your progress on computers in future as this will save them time. They are also going to find ways of measuring the school's improvement more effectively. I know that you are all working hard to reach your targets and improve your writing. I wish you all a happy and restful summer holiday.

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector