

Geoffrey Field Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109782
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	310093
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Trevor Davies

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Wakelin
Headteacher	Miss Sue Farrow
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Exbourne Road Whitley Wood Reading RG2 8RH
Telephone number	01189 015473
Fax number	01189 015474

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Most pupils at this average sized school are from a White British background. However, the proportion of pupils from different ethnic groups and those at an early stage of learning English has risen significantly in the last three years. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly for speech and language problems is also well above the national average. Almost a quarter of the pupils qualify for free school meals, which is higher than average. The children enter the school from Nursery in the term they are five. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I am proud to say my child attends Geoffrey Field Infant School' is a comment typical of the regard many parents have for this outstanding school. The headteacher and her leadership team are exemplary role models and their care and commitment inspire all adults working in the school to provide a very high quality of education for the pupils. All members of the staff and governing body work hard towards the same goal of helping pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in a safe, caring environment. The school has gone from strength to strength and its record of accomplishment shows that it has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Standards have risen in the last two years because the quality of teaching has improved and pupils make excellent progress. Standards are broadly average overall by the time the pupils leave. This represents outstanding achievement from a very low starting point when children enter the school. Although pupils make very good progress in writing, they do even better in reading and mathematics. The progress of pupils is evident in all year groups, and is tracked and monitored very effectively by teachers, the leadership team and governors to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. Pupils with learning difficulties and for whom English is not their first language, receive high quality additional support and make very good progress.

Parents are tremendously positive in their views on the school. They remark on the reasons they believe help children to make outstanding progress in their learning. 'The teachers do a fantastic job which definitely reflects on the children', is just one such comment. The behaviour of most pupils is exemplary and helps to develop a great learning atmosphere. Pupils are able to work on their own or equally well in small groups. The emphasis which the school has placed on reading skills has not only led to a big improvement in standards but has also helped the children to be more independent and take greater responsibility for their own learning. 'If you write, it helps your reading; if you read it helps your writing', stated one child. This also typifies the strong partnership between home and school, in which parents, teachers and children work together to improve the children's reading using the reading target cards.

The children rightly find the curriculum exciting and inspiring. It is enriched by many additional visits, clubs and activities, giving very good support to pupils' personal development and well-being. During the Inspection, Year 1 pupils learnt about the past by visiting the Reading History Museum and Foundation Stage children experienced making ice cream. Sporting activities, such as the Active Lunchtime project, music, art and after-school clubs contribute strongly to pupils' well-being. They have a secure understanding of the importance of healthy living and exercise and a well-developed sense of being safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and integrated through all aspects of school life. The school council effectively represents the views of the pupils, which are drawn from class council meetings. This 'pupil voice' illustrates the central role that pupils play in their school community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents talk very positively about their children's first experience of school. They feel that staff are 'excellent in encouraging children to mix' and 'always have the children's best interests at heart'. The majority of children start school with skills well below those expected, with an increasing number of children needing extra support in speech, language and mathematical

development. Both Nursery and Reception classes provide an inspiring, welcoming and well-planned environment, which stimulates pupils to learn. Staff make good use of both indoor and outdoor learning environments and even in the rain during the inspection, children were fully participating in running the cafe in the Reception class. Themes such as 'The Seaside' allow children to develop skills across the full range of early learning experiences. Teaching is excellent and staff use assessments carefully to plan next steps in learning so that most children make good progress. Nevertheless, at the end of the Foundation Stage very few of the children reach the nationally expected goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Tests and teacher assessments in 2008 show that pupils' attainment continues to rise building on the progress and achievement of the previous year. From a very low starting point when they first entered school, this group of pupils have made outstanding progress overall in reading and mathematics. Even in writing where they are not doing quite as well, these pupils have made very good progress once they have developed other language skills. Pupils' progress is equally good in other age groups as it is for children whose first language is not English and for pupils with learning difficulties. These improvements have been achieved by consistently high quality teaching, and focused work, such as linking sounds to letters. Together with the effective use of assessment and tracking data to target any under-achievement, this shows the increasingly effective leadership and management in these areas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They enjoy all that the school offers, have very positive relationships with staff and other pupils, and are invariably ready to learn. This has a significant impact on the progress they make in lessons and is under-pinned by their behaviour, which is usually excellent. The few pupils who find it difficult to learn are supported very well and are helped to begin to take responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and safe. The school council ensure that pupils' views are taken into account and they are particularly proud of the improvements being made to playtime equipment. Attendance levels are rising and there are good procedures for promoting good attendance and tackling absence. Pupils make excellent progress in their basic skills and this means they are very well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

High quality teaching contributes to pupils' progress and is a significant reason why the school is successful. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that pupils' differing needs are met. Very good questioning helps to challenge more able pupils and enables teachers to build up a clear picture of how pupils of all abilities are doing and what needs extra attention. A high priority is placed on helping pupils to develop the speaking and listening skills they need to learn

effectively. There is a high level of consistency in the way that staff approach their work. Those new to teaching are supported very well to enable them to make a good start to their careers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' capabilities and an enthusiasm for their work, which rubs off on the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and focused. This ensures that pupils have a secure grasp of basic skills in reading and mathematics, and that the curriculum is sufficiently rich and varied to encourage them to apply these skills. The school has devised a writing programme to help improve the level of pupils' writing and this is beginning to have a positive effect. High quality teacher planning, intervention and support for communication, language and literacy has had a great impact on pupils' progress. This means that achievement for pupils such as those with speech and language difficulties is the same as for other pupils. Whilst pupils make excellent academic progress as a result of this, their personal and social development is also enhanced by exciting topics and many additional activities which help to enliven the curriculum. These activities include visits to special places but also after school clubs such as football, golf and music groups. There is also provision for more able pupils through the Book and Philosophy clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The high level of care provided by staff ensures that pupils feel safe and able to learn. Systems to check on the suitability of adults to work with children are extremely robust. A careful check is made of the risk by all activities and visits out of school. Procedures to protect children, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are excellent. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well. As a result, these pupils, including those with speech and language difficulties, make rapid progress. Very well organised support for those pupils new to learning English means that they soon gain confidence and make similar progress to other pupils. Staff keep a very close check on pupils' progress in all subjects. The information gathered is used very well to track the progress of pupils of different abilities or backgrounds and to identify where extra help might be needed. High quality feedback to pupils, coupled with challenging personal learning targets, adds to pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and where they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has had a profound influence on the school's improvement. Through her strong leadership, and ably supported by her senior team and governors, the school has a clear sense of direction and purpose. Their effectiveness in raising standards and achievement and moving the school forward has been recognised by parents, one of whom wrote, 'The head and teaching staff are doing a fantastic job'. The senior leadership team has responded exceptionally well to the changing intake of the school by very effectively targeting pupil support to those children who need it. Subject leaders are increasingly effective in building up a clear picture of standards and achievement in their areas and identifying the next stage of development. There are clear lines of delegation, responsibility and accountability for teaching teams and subject

managers. The governors are very supportive of the school whilst challenging it and holding it to account for its decisions.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

23 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Geoffrey Field Infant School, Reading, RG2 8RH

Thank you for being helpful and making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us that you really enjoy coming to school and we agree with you that it is an excellent school.

Here are some of the things we think the school does well.

- You are reaching higher standards and making outstanding progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job.
- The other teachers and governors are a great help to her in running the school.
- We think you all get on really well and your behaviour is excellent.

There is just one thing we have asked the school to do to make things even better.

- We have asked them to improve standards in writing.

You can help by trying hard to do your best and continue to enjoy your time at school. Remember to ask teachers if you need help.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Davies

Lead Inspector