

Histon and Impington Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110752
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310407
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Cosway

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	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Barton
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2003
School address	New School Road Histon Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 9LL
Telephone number	01223 568826
Fax number	01223 568827

Age group	4-7
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Inspection number	310407

© Crown copyright 2008

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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Histon and Impington Infant School is larger than average for a school of this type. The school population represents a mix of social backgrounds, but pupils are of mainly White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is also below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above national average, and there are more than average with statements of special educational need. This is because there is a special unit, integrated with the school, for children between the ages of 5 and 7 most of whom have statements.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself to be satisfactory, and the inspection confirms this. It is improving rapidly, because of the hard work of the staff, led well by the headteacher. A significant strength of the school is the positive attitudes it fosters. Attainment has risen over the last two years. The attainment of most children is above average on entry. Pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily so that at the end of Year 2 standards are above national averages. There are weaknesses in the development of pupils' writing skills. Consequently, fewer pupils attain highly in English than in mathematics.

Pupils' personal development is good. Parents report that their children's confidence grows, along with their interest in learning. One wrote, 'Our child loves school and is thriving.' Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and have many friends in school. Almost all behave well. They pay attention to their teachers and treat the pupils in the Infant Assessment Unit with care and respect. The good health education programme helps them to live healthy lives and they have many opportunities to take responsibility. Their contributions to the school community are good.

Teaching is satisfactory in its effectiveness over time. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection, reflecting recent improvements. However, teachers are working to overcome previous underachievement when expectations of pupils' performance were lower. They manage classes well and have good relationships with their pupils, so that pupils concentrate and work hard. However, not all teachers provide enough written guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work. The curriculum is good. A strength is the way that pupils are regrouped for English so that they can be taught alongside pupils of a similar ability.

The systems for care, support and guidance are good. Pupils have satisfactory preparation for their future and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive comprehensive support and make good progress. The headteacher leads the school well. She has identified the key areas of weakness in the school and brought about significant improvements. Leadership is satisfactory overall. The new leadership team is working hard to support the headteacher, but some roles are insufficiently developed. Governance is satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money. There has been sufficient improvement since the last inspection because of the headteacher's skilled leadership and there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Staff build carefully on the children's readiness to learn and quickly establish clear expectations and routines. Children respond well because they are learning in an environment where they feel happy, secure and valued. The strong staff team, working with the new Foundation Stage Leader, responds enthusiastically to recently improved working practices. Satisfactory, sometimes good, teaching ensures that children make satisfactory progress from their generally above average starting points. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good use of the outside learning area. There is a special focus on boys: some weaknesses were detected in their progress. They are given activities designed specially to help them and this is successful. Planning is based on the Foundation Stage recommendations. Even so, activities are occasionally too prescribed,

preventing children from finding out for themselves and from developing their independence by seeking out and selecting their own resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' writing skills so that they communicate more clearly and accurately.
- Develop marking that give pupils more effective guidance on how to improve their work.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of the new leadership team so that it becomes an effective force in support of school improvement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress in literacy, numeracy and social skills. Almost all attain at least the expected standards for their age by the time they start Year 1.

The progress made by pupils from Reception to Year 2 has improved, especially in numeracy. The school has adopted more effective ways of assessing, tracking and supporting pupils' progress, which have raised teachers' expectations of what their pupils should be achieving. Standards have risen as a result and in 2007 they were above average overall. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily through the school. Effective teaching of numeracy and reading results in standards above average by the end of Year 2, but standards of writing are close to average. Not enough progress is made in developing writing skills.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress, because of the range of provision for them within and out of the unit. All pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), science, art and design technology because of good teaching in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes to learning. They behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and develop a suitable knowledge of other cultures as well as their own. They feel safe in the school, eat healthily, take regular exercise and participate in a good range of physical activities. They work effectively on their own or in small groups and all respond well to sanctions and praise. Attendance is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, including caring for their environment and raising money for charities. The school council plays a significant role in helping to bring about changes, such as designing an outdoor area and painting murals on the playground. The school's strong culture of fostering the creative arts means that pupils enjoy plenty of artistic activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers throughout the school plan and manage lessons well and make good use of questioning to keep pupils' interest and to check how much has been understood. There is a good level of adult support in most classes so that pupils benefit from small group tuition. Technology is used well to make teaching and learning interesting and stimulating. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well by teaching assistants. Pupils do not make as much progress as they could, however, because teachers' marking of work is not helping them to learn from their mistakes. Teachers do not give enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work and basic errors are not always corrected.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been well planned in order to meet pupils' needs and adapted to develop links between subjects. Pupils in Year 2 are grouped according to ability for their English lessons: this helps to ensure that they are set work that is appropriately challenging. A recent focus on raising standards in mathematics has been very effective in bringing about improvements. The rich provision for art, design technology and ICT helps pupils to develop their skills and make good progress. A good programme of school visits is supplemented by a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities to enhance pupils' learning. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in school and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn how to relate to others, stay healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils. The health, safety and welfare of pupils have high priorities and the school complies with all legal requirements for safeguarding them. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support in lessons and in small groups taught by the coordinator in the 'Glass Room'. Pupils in the Infant Assessment Unit are given plenty of guidance to help them join in the activities provided by caring and very knowledgeable staff, but there are areas to improve. For example, the new phonics programme is underdeveloped and the classroom environment is not stimulating enough. The school works well with outside agencies to provide specialist help for pupils with specific issues, such as speech and language therapy. Academic guidance is developing satisfactorily, although there is not always enough challenge for the most able pupils in writing. Most classes have learning targets on display but the school is still developing individual short-term targets to help pupils know what to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's performance has been causing concern, because standards reached by seven year-olds had been falling until last year. It has made significant improvement since then under the capable guidance of the headteacher. She has identified the areas of weakness and monitored

lessons constructively and rigorously. She has brought about changes as a result that have led to improvements in the standard of teaching. The quality of lesson planning has improved and teachers' expectations of what their pupils are capable of have been raised. The role played by governors is satisfactory. Their monitoring of the work of the school and their strategic planning are strengthening. Some subject co-ordinators are new, but they are tackling the role enthusiastically. Subject leadership has improved and is now good. Most members of the leadership team are supporting the headteacher's work to improve the school, but their effectiveness is uneven and so leadership overall is satisfactory. Good management ensures that the school runs smoothly and staff morale is generally high.

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Histon and Impington Infant School, Cambridge, CB4 9LL

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we visited your school. You told us that you like your school. We were impressed with how helpful and kind you are to each other. We enjoyed the lessons that we shared with you and saw how well you work. These are some more of the good things about your school.

- Your behaviour is good; you work hard and enjoy your lessons.
- You are better at reading and mathematics than most children of your age.
- You make good contributions to the school community.
- You learn how to work together, care for others and live healthy lives.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and all adults care for you well.
- The headteacher is bringing about improvements that are raising standards and making the school even better for you.

We have suggested to your school some things that we think will bring about even more improvement. The most important are:

- The school needs to develop the work of the leadership team so that it can help the headteacher to bring about change more quickly.
- When teachers mark your work, they should tell you how to improve it. They need to give you more help, for example, with your writing so that it is better and more accurate.

You can help by checking your written work carefully, to make sure that you have spelt words correctly, that you have not missed out words and that the punctuation is correct. Thank you again for being so kind and friendly to us.

Paul Cosway

Lead inspector