

Field House Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112574
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310929
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne 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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bridget Jones
Headteacher	Miss Denise Wells
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Lower Whitworth Road Ilkeston Derbyshire DE7 4LT
Telephone number	01159324526
Fax number	

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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

This is a typically average-sized infant school serving part of the Derbyshire town of Ilkeston. The number of pupils on roll is stable. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Currently there are four pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is an average number of pupils who have a learning difficulty and/or disability but a slightly below average number of these pupils with statements of special educational need. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is about half the average. The Nursery accepts children in the Autumn or Spring term following their third birthday and they enter the school with attainment that is slightly below that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the local authority view that this is a satisfactory school, with some good elements. The Foundation Stage is good and a particular strength. Children's personal development is also consistently good and they enjoy being at school. The working environment is calm and purposeful. Staff know individual children well and give good support to those who require additional help or find things difficult. Staff work well in partnership with others to ensure that every child achieves as well as they can. For example, staff link closely with outside agencies such as the special needs advisory service. Many steps have been taken to address the issues from the previous inspection and to bring about improvement, for example the enhancement of children's physical enjoyment and learning outdoors and the motivation of boys by introducing topics that have a wider appeal. The school has some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Lessons are never less than satisfactory, so pupils make good progress overall and they achieve well in the end of Year 2 tests. Children are well cared for and guided pastorally, although they do not always receive sufficient academic guidance. Some pupils could do even better as sometimes they find work too easy.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The management structure of the school has changed and currently the whole school overview is not considered until the year end. The school is able to show individual pupil's progress but does not collectively know how the school is doing at any one point in time. Planning and assessment have improved in the Foundation Stage and the school is now currently beginning to adopt similar systems in Key Stage 1. Some target-setting has taken place. However, targets are not always tailored to individual pupils to be of maximum benefit. Some exciting initiatives are underway, including the provision of more outdoor activities in the afternoons and innovative integrated activities across the whole of the Foundation Stage on one day each week. The children speak very favourably of these as they find the activities more exciting. However, sometimes in lessons children are listening for too long and the range of activities is too similar to ensure that children are continually challenged. Staff have worked very hard since the last inspection, but have been too slow to act upon the advice of the local authority which, in their annual report of a year ago, identified similar findings to this inspection. Nevertheless, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress and achieve well given their starting points. Staff have securely established a planned curriculum that incorporates all the required elements. Children settle quickly in the Nursery and in their new Reception classes. The transition between the two works particularly effectively. Regular observations inform assessment and the planned support for individual children. The well-presented environment, both in the classroom and in the outdoor areas, ensures that the school makes good use of resources. Staff have made innovative use of good quality integrated activities in the afternoons and on Fridays. Children's enjoyment in these sessions is high. They are able to complete work to their satisfaction and their confidence grows immeasurably.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a clear vision and strategic direction for the school, underpinned by a robust system of monitoring and evaluation, to ensure a cycle of continual school improvement.

- Ensure that all teaching and learning is as good as the best.
- Provide clear individualised targets for pupils which are appropriately challenging to their needs. Ensure that pupils are consistently clear how to improve their work.
- Enhance the curriculum and the lesson planning to capture the interest of all pupils and to involve them in activities which develop their thinking and problem-solving skills.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness 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: 2

From attainment on entry being slightly below average, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This then continues in Key Stage 1, so that by the time pupils leave the school they achieve slightly above the national average in all areas. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress due to the good support they receive. The school has adapted the curriculum to appeal more to both genders as a response to boys' underachievement at the last inspection. It is too early to make a judgement on the impact of this. Although the school has a significant number of pupils attaining the higher levels in each subject, during lessons the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and therefore do not always achieve their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good, although cultural development remains just satisfactory. Pupils maintain healthy lifestyles. They have a good grasp of the basic principles of this through curriculum developments in science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The children make healthy choices at lunchtimes and snacktimes. However, those bringing packed lunches do not always remember to reduce sugary and salty foods from their diet. Pupils know how to keep themselves and their peers' safe through the good quality pastoral care they receive. The school has improved attendance, which is now good, and continues to monitor this most carefully. Pupils understand how to behave well and know what is expected of them. Their behaviour is well managed in lessons, therefore behaviour is good. At times pupils, particularly boys, become a little restless if they are listening for prolonged periods. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community by taking on some responsibilities, but the school recognises that it needs to further develop their role within school. Children's good basic skills and their good social and emotional development contribute positively to their future economic wellbeing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although some teaching and learning is good, too much remains satisfactory. Inspectors agree with the school's own view that the most successful elements of teaching and learning are within the Foundation Stage, which is now well planned and assessed. Hence, the range of activities is mostly well matched to children's needs. Across the school, successful relationships in every classroom have a positive impact on learning. Staff give good priority to basic skills

and the interactive white boards are well utilised in Key Stage 1 to enhance teaching. In the best lessons, pupils do not listen for too long and quickly get down to practical activities, which are particularly engaging for boys. Also in these lessons, staff make more effective use of questioning to challenge pupils and to check what they have learnt. Teaching assistants are sometimes used effectively, but not consistently so. The pace of some lessons is still a little laboured and often those children who are quick to learn are not stimulated sufficiently into applying their thinking skills. Sometimes the selection of activities is not varied enough to take account of the full range of learners' abilities or to test a range of different skills and knowledge. Ineffective monitoring has resulted in staff not being fully aware of strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own view that the curriculum is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been overhauled and now effectively covers all the required elements, with due consideration being given to early reading, writing and numeracy through play. Across the school, all of the statutory requirements are incorporated, with a strong emphasis on PSHE. The quality of the curriculum continues to improve as staff plan more practical activities. These are regularly included in afternoon sessions in Reception and Year 1 classes, and sometimes in Year 2. Children are particularly enthusiastic about science, art and physical education. All of these subjects have strong practical elements and children benefit from the more recent changes made to these areas. Curricular enrichment includes some outside visits, although these are few. Parents and pupils believe there are not enough extra-curricular activities. The curriculum continues to strengthen as the school introduces more creative and cross-curricular elements. However, inconsistencies in monitoring and evaluation means that staff have yet to identify where sometimes the curriculum is less stimulating, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although care, guidance and support are judged to be satisfactory overall, there are some real strengths in this area. The school's pastoral care is good and has a really positive impact on pupils developing confidence, and learning successfully. This is an inclusive school, which gives good priority to supporting pupils well. Procedures for safeguarding comply with recent regulations. However, inspectors are unable to confirm the school's own view and judgement of themselves on this aspect of provision due to the lack of consistent academic guidance which pupils receive. Target setting is too slow to be fully embedded and pupils are not really clear of what they are aiming for. Sometimes, when given, the targets are not specific enough to meet children's individual needs. Staff are also not consistent enough in the guidance they give to pupils about how to make their work better and improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff team is hardworking and dedicated. They have a strong commitment to equal opportunities. Although achievement is good, mainly due to staff knowing pupils well and endeavouring to meet their individual needs, some pupils are still not doing as well as they could. This is because management systems are not yet

sufficiently in place to enable the school to have a view of how it is doing at interim stages throughout the year. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is more successful. However, because of the management structure, there is a lack of ownership and responsibility in some curriculum areas, which are necessary to drive up standards. There is no clear vision and direction for the school because the leadership team mainly focus on day-to-day management. Whilst the school has set itself clear targets, there is insufficient rigour and monitoring to check that they are on course to achieve these. The process of self-evaluation is not fully embedded. Inspection confirms some of the school's judgements. The school recognises that the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is still not consistently good enough. Systems introduced have strengthened the support teachers give to each other and also to team-working, but have insufficiently addressed strategic direction, monitoring, and evaluation. Governors are committed to supporting the school and provide satisfactory challenge. They discharge their responsibilities reasonably well. Staff and governors have been a little too slow to bring about change in some areas and therefore they have demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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

21 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Field House Infant School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4LT

Mrs Harvey and I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were pleased that you were so willing to talk to us about Field House Infants and to explain what you like about it. We particularly enjoyed chatting to you over lunch and we were impressed that you make healthy meal choices. However, some of you with packed lunches do not always remember not to bring sugary and salty foods.

We agree with you that you are part of a happy school and that you have good relationships with your teachers and with each other. We know that you enjoy the activities and working in the outdoor areas. This is when you learn best. We think that the Nursery and Reception classes are good and that teachers have worked very hard to plan your work and record the good progress you are making. Throughout the school, you receive good support when you find work more difficult. Your attendance has improved and you are nearly always well behaved. We know that you really enjoy any visits and after-school clubs, but agree with your parents that it would be good to provide more of these, particularly for those of you that enjoy art or sport, to make the curriculum more interesting. When you are clear of what to do to improve your work, we think you make better progress. We have asked your teachers to always make this clear for you, for example in your books when they mark your work, and to always make sure the work they give you is hard enough to make you think.

Sometimes the staff at your school are so busy planning your work every day that they do not give as much time to thinking about the direction the school is heading for in the future. We have asked the head teacher and her management team, alongside the governing body, to think more about how they can improve the school and ensure that all of you receive good lessons or better. They will need to be clear about what makes the most successful lessons and keep checking this.

We hope you continue to do well and that you all have a happy year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector