

# Fleetville Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117138
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312509
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Cox

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	337
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Fiona Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Androulla Peek
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2005
<b>School address</b>	Royal Road St. Albans Hertfordshire AL1 4LX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 851543
<b>Fax number</b>	01727 812375

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspection focused in particular on these areas: the implementation of new teaching strategies to raise standards in writing, mathematics and science: the balance and enrichment of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the new leadership, management, and governance structures. Evidence was collected from observations of lessons, sampling of pupils' work and discussions with them, the staff and chair of governors, and a scrutiny of a wide range school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Most pupils in this large infant school are from White British families, and there is a higher than usual proportion from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion whose first language is not English is above average and 17 home languages are represented in the school. The proportion entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a large Nursery, and about half of the children transfer to the Reception classes, with the remainder going to other local schools. About half of the children enter the Reception classes from a wide range of other pre-school providers. Attainment on entry to Reception is similar to the national expectations, although there are strengths in the children's personal development, their speech and knowledge of number. The school is part of extended school consortium, offering a wide range of out-of-hours provision for children and adults. It has a number of awards, including Investors in People, Playground Partnerships, Healthy Schools and the Early Years Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an excellent school. There is outstanding teamwork and all staff have a complete understanding of their roles and of how these fit together so that the school runs like a well-oiled machine. They share a determination to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. The headteacher sets an exceptionally clear direction and there are very high expectations of teaching and achievement. Almost all parents agree that, 'The school is very well led and managed, with a very happy environment and a positive and supportive outlook' and, 'The head... is an inspirational leader... and class teachers have been enthusiastic and caring.' Through rigorous checking of the school's provision, the senior leadership team has an extremely good understanding of each aspect. A very detailed bank of monitoring information has been built up; for example, from tests and assessments, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and observations of lessons. Any shortcoming is identified rapidly and effective action taken to remedy it. Pupils who are in danger of falling behind are identified and appropriate strategies used to support them. Many parents commented on the good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governance is impressive: governors are organised particularly well and carry out their duties with understanding and commitment. As a result, the school provides excellent value for money and is extremely well placed to improve further.

Particular attention to every detail and support for teachers to develop their professional expertise has ensured that teaching is outstanding. Through regular and thorough assessment, teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils' abilities and progress. They plan activities extremely carefully to build on what the pupils already know and understand. The pace of most lessons is brisk and teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to match pupils' preferred ways of working. They inform pupils about the purpose of the lesson and remind them regularly so that are sure of what they are to learn. Often, teachers help them to develop criteria by which they can assess their own achievement against clear objectives. Pupils are then encouraged to measure for themselves whether or not they have reached them. They have suitable targets for their achievement, which they understand. Teachers help pupils to see how well they are moving towards them. The school is developing strategies to further develop pupils' own involvement in this system.

The interesting use of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), and lively teaching keeps pupils thoroughly engaged. They say that lessons are fun and they want to try to do their best. As a result, achievement is excellent. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been rising over recent years and have been exceptionally high in reading, writing, mathematics and science since 2003. Although still exceptionally high, the results in 2007 were lower than in previous years because there was a higher proportion of pupils who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over the years, standards have not been quite as strong in mathematics as they have in English or science. Nevertheless, the challenging targets set by the school are regularly reached, and often exceeded. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English receive very good support and teaching assistants are prepared well for the work they do with them. However, their expertise is not used well at the beginning of the lesson to support the teaching of the whole class. The school has initiated strong links with many external agencies to provide further support for those who need it. The outstanding curriculum contributes greatly to the pupils' thorough enjoyment. Planning is meticulous and ensures that pupils can make consistent progress throughout. Teachers have embraced the recent national guidance about English and mathematics with

enthusiasm and used it to ensure that there are relevant links between subjects. The very close links with the partner junior school ensure further consistency in the curriculum.

There are many visitors to the school; for example, the visiting artist who inspired some of the very competent artwork on display. Visits also extend pupils' experiences, such as the very recent trip to Kew Gardens to study the sculptures of Henry Moore, which stimulated much excited discussion and writing. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a choir and the French club. The school is assiduous in celebrating the culture, language and national backgrounds of its pupils and building the geography curriculum around these. This approach makes an important contribution to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition, the extremely good pastoral care and guidance ensures that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Pupils feel safe and know that there are adults they can confide in if they are distressed. They are given many opportunities for reflection and quiet thought. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to stay healthy. They make a very good contribution to the community, and the school council takes its responsibilities extremely seriously. Attendance is good; however, in spite of the school's rigorous efforts, some parents take their children on extended holidays overseas. All pupils have duties so that they are able to use their initiative and grow in confidence. They enjoy being playground 'buddies' and taking care of each other. The outstanding relationships between them and with adults contribute to the 'lovely friendly atmosphere' noted by many parents and also to the smooth running of lessons. The high standards pupils reach and their excellent personal qualities prepare them particularly well for the next stage of their education and adult lives.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The atmosphere in the Nursery, even at an early stage in the year, is calm with a quiet focus on the range of interesting activities. Typical of the comments made by many parents was, 'I have been particularly impressed with how the teachers have helped my child settle into school...there is a very strong focus on making each child feel like a special individual.' Children are encouraged to explore the stimulating environment and are provided with a very good balance of adult led and independent activities. Therefore, they achieve very well so that by the end of Nursery, standards are above those expected for their age. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage as a whole is organised extremely well to build consistently on children's skills and knowledge. Planning is extremely thorough and gives a very good balance of activities in all the areas of learning. In Reception, excellent organisation of the sessions and well-designed activities to reinforce learning ensure that children make rapid progress. Their personal and social skills, linguistic and mathematical abilities are particularly strong. They talk with assurance about their work and concentrate extremely well on the tasks they are given. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all children reach the expected levels for their age and many exceed them.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on the work already started to ensure that pupils achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and science.
- Ensure that teaching assistants' expertise is used consistently and effectively to support teaching during whole-class teaching times.

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## 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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

<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>	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**

19 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Fleetville Infant and Nursery School, Royal Road, St Alban's, AL1 4LX.

Thank you so much for the way that you helped me during my visit. I enjoyed myself very much and thought that you might like to know what I found out about your school.

You told me that you go to a fantastic school where your teachers are really nice to you and make your lessons fun. I agree with you - I think you are very lucky to have so many exciting things to do, like the Year 2 visit to Kew Gardens, which you told me all about! I thought the artwork around the school and the displays about other countries showed how interesting some of the work is. Because Mrs Peet and the teachers do such a good job of running the school and teaching you, you do really well and your reading, writing and mathematics are much better than the work of many children in other schools. Your mathematics is not quite as good as the other subjects so I have asked your teachers to help you get a little better at it. You could help by trying even harder than you do already and always doing your homework. I think that the teaching assistants do a good job in helping a lot of you to get better at your work but they do not have a lot to do when your teachers are teaching you. Therefore, I have asked your teachers if they will let the teaching assistants join in and help.

I was very impressed by the way you behave, the way that you concentrate and how sensible you are. Thank you to the school council for talking to me - you were full of ideas and I could see that you are very good at your jobs. I enjoyed my healthy school dinner and chatting to some of the younger children.

I am sure you will all carry on doing really well because you have such a good attitude to your work.

My best wishes for your future.

Pat Cox

Lead Inspector