

Callis Grange Nursery and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118406
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312926
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kerry Sabin-Dawson
Headteacher	A Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002
School address	Beacon Road Broadstairs CT10 3DG
Telephone number	01843 862531
Fax number	01843 867092

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of significant social deprivation. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below expectations for the age of the children. There is a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has reduced in size since its last inspection by the equivalent of three classes. There is a high rate of mobility as pupils join and leave the school at different points during the year. The school offers extended services to the local community which include a Breakfast Club, Sure Start Library and Baby Bounce. The school has achieved a number of national awards, including Investors in People, Healthy School status, Early Years Naacemmark (ICT), the ICT Mark, Eco School Silver Award and Active Mark Gold. There are Leading Teachers for literacy, ICT and Healthy Schools. The school is recognised by the Local Authority as a centre of excellence for transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. No Nursery children were in school at the time of the inspection and Reception children had just started their staged programme of entry.

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 outstanding school that gives its pupils an excellent start to their education. As one parent summed it up, 'I have nothing but praise for this school, it is a wonderful environment for children to learn in'. It all begins in the Nursery, where highly skilled practitioners nurture children's curiosity and harness their enthusiasm for learning. The Reception year builds on this exceptionally well by extending children's knowledge and understanding, fostering creativity and promoting good physical development. Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards in line with national averages by the end of Year 2. This represents outstanding achievement given the low starting points of the majority of pupils.

So what makes Callis Grange so special? Many parents wrote in praise of the school's exceptional leadership and excellent teaching – and they are right. Under the leadership of an inspirational headteacher, the dynamic management team is a driving force in promoting high standards and ensuring consistently high quality learning for all pupils. The school's outstanding capacity for improvement is evident, for example, in the huge strides that have been made in the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) over the past few years. Innovative approaches have resulted in local and national recognition for the school. Every adult who works in the school is totally committed to ensuring pupils' academic success and their personal well-being. First-rate teamwork throughout the school promotes consistency of approach and this helps pupils to feel very safe and secure. Despite their young age, the pupils are exceptionally well involved in initiatives to keep healthy and to care for the environment. As they move through the school, they grow in confidence and self-esteem and are very well equipped to face the challenges of the years ahead.

The pupils' eager enjoyment of school is due in no small part to the exciting and stimulating curriculum, with its vast range of enrichment activities. Learning is brought to life by teachers whose enthusiasm and creativity are obvious in their first-rate planning and in lessons that interest the pupils and motivate them to learn. Beavered away behind the scenes are the subject leaders, who are constantly seeking ways to improve learning in all areas of the curriculum. Governors do a splendid job of checking that the school is doing as well for its pupils as it possibly can. They also ensure that every penny of the school's increasingly tight budget is spent in the pupils' best interests. This has led to enormous improvements in the learning environment and resources and an ambitious on-going programme of refurbishment.

School leaders, teachers and governors have exceptionally high expectations and set challenging targets for every pupil, regardless of their background, gender or ability. These are used very effectively to ensure that every pupil makes the best possible progress. Of particular note is the excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make up almost half of the school's intake. Many of these pupils make outstanding progress to reach average standards by the time they leave. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are supported equally well and comfortably exceed national expectations by the end of Year 2.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The teachers' expert knowledge of Early Years education is evident in the exceptionally well-planned curriculum and the vibrant and exciting classrooms and outdoor areas. Children were met with a superb array of activities to explore from their very first morning in school,

whether filling up their car with petrol at the 'Callis Grange Garage', shouting through underground speaking tubes or playing in the role play areas. Home visits and 'taster' sessions help children to feel secure and confident when they start school, and close relationships with parents and carers ensure that teachers quickly get to know each child's particular needs.

As a result of first-rate provision, standards are steadily rising. Pupils now in Year 1 achieved standards close to the national average in many areas of learning. Standards on entry are particularly low in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Those in writing and calculations are lower than in other areas at the end of Reception, despite the children's excellent progress. The children's personal and social development is outstanding because it is the school's number-one priority. Children quickly form valuable relationships, learn to distinguish right from wrong, and understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Through play, adults very successfully guide them to appreciate the importance of sharing and taking turns.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has no significant weaknesses and is very well equipped to continue to improve by implementing the priorities already identified in its strategic plan. For this year, these focus on raising standards further in reading and writing, developing the Nursery environment and incorporating the development of a new on-site Children's Centre.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Apart from a slight dip in 2005 caused by the nature of the cohort, standards in the Year 2 national tests have been broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the past five years. Given the steadily increasing proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the high turnover of pupils, this represents outstanding achievement considering pupils' low attainment on entry. Teachers very successfully set targets for each pupil that are challenging but attainable. The vast majority of pupils achieve them and a significant number do even better. School records show that progress is equally marked in every year group.

Pupils with learning difficulties make excellent progress because teachers plan work that meets their specific needs and learning assistants provide valuable support in lessons and through additional programmes taught to small groups. The most able pupils are given demanding work that very effectively extends their knowledge and understanding to suitably high levels. Pupils achieve high standards in ICT, physical education and art, reflecting the school's strong emphasis on developing a broad range of skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Excellent foundations are laid in the Nursery and Reception, where children grow in confidence, become increasingly independent and learn to share and cooperate with others. Throughout the school, pupils develop the personal qualities and skills exceptionally well that will equip them to face the challenges of the junior school and beyond. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour are key factors in their excellent progress. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for and many talk with boundless enthusiasm about how they enjoy school. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance, which rose to slightly above

average in 2007. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong, a keen spiritual awareness and form very good relationships with other children and adults. Their contribution to the school and wider communities is excellent. They develop an early understanding of the democratic process by electing the head boy and girl and school councillors. Pupils play an important role in deciding how to improve the school and in raising funds for charities and playground resources. They learn very well how to be good citizens, showing respect for the environment and appreciating the traditions of different cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching is the key factor behind pupils' high levels of achievement. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' performance are founded on their excellent subject knowledge and enhanced by calm but firm classroom management. Planning is exemplary and provides tasks well matched to pupils' different stages of learning. This results in their enthusiastic participation in lessons. Throughout the school, clear explanations at the start of lessons ensure pupils know what they will be learning. Pupils find learning fun because lessons are interesting. For example, Year 1 pupils took much delight in using their outdoor stage to act out the story of 'The Little Red Hen', using puppets they had made the day before.

Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to provide a visual stimulus to learning. In many lessons, teachers' perceptive questioning, together with the use of 'talk partners', helps pupils to clarify their thinking and consider their responses. In all classes, learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties. Teachers' thorough marking and pupils' knowledge of their learning targets give staff a clear understanding of how to improve. As one pupil said, 'Marking is a good way for teachers to help us get better'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's rich curriculum provides exceptionally well for all pupils and is enriched by an impressive range of visits, visitors, special events and out-of-class activities. In addition to the strong focus given to basic skills, teachers very successfully make purposeful links between subjects to enhance pupils' understanding and enjoyment of what is being taught. For example, following the recent visit of 'The Bug Man', pupils' work relating to science and mini-beasts resulted in much high quality artwork. The enthusiasm with which pupils speak about physical activities and ICT reflects the school's success in gaining national awards for these subjects. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils a very clear understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy living. Working towards gaining an 'Eco-Award' has considerably enhanced pupils' understanding of their responsibility towards the environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There are excellent arrangements for promoting pupils' good health and well-being and for ensuring that they are kept safe and secure. A few parents regard the security measures as a barrier, but the vast majority feel that the school makes every effort to welcome them in and

keep them well informed. Excellent procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to plan work that helps pupils to make rapid progress, including those with learning difficulties. Parents clearly appreciate being kept abreast of children's learning. As one commented, 'We are kept up to date through children's regular target/aims sheets'. The school makes very effective use of its close links with outside agencies to support all pupils. It is actively seeking to extend its provision to families and has set up a Sure Start Library and Baby Bounce, as well as offering a daily Breakfast Club, which is well supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's vision and aspirations for the pupils are shared by the whole staff and governing body, all of whom radiate enthusiasm for what they do and take pride in the pupils' achievements. Excellence at all levels and dynamic teamwork keep the school in the forefront of educational development. New initiatives are carefully weighed and tested before being embraced with vigour. The very strong staff team works closely together to implement teaching strategies and evaluate their effectiveness. Outstanding leadership of the Foundation Stage is reflected in the very high quality provision for children in the Nursery and Reception. Close collaboration in year-group teams makes for consistency and continuity in learning. Staff, governors, pupils and parents actively contribute to the school's strategic improvement plan, which is firmly rooted in rigorous self-evaluation. The school is constantly evolving and seeking ways to improve the pupils' learning and raise their achievement.

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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	3
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

13 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Callis Grange Nursery and Infant School, Beacon Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 3DG

We really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you. Thank you for talking to us and letting us watch some of your lessons. We think that Callis Grange is an excellent school and here are some of the reasons why:

- You make excellent progress in your learning because your lessons are fun and there are lots of really interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults look after you very well and help you to settle into school quickly so that you feel very safe and secure.
- You know how important it is to eat healthy food and you take part in lots of sports and games.
- We could see that you enjoy school a great deal. Your behaviour is outstanding and you work very hard at all your activities.
- The school helps you to be confident and independent so that you will do well when you move on to the junior school.
- You have lots of really good jobs to do, such as being on the school council and helping in the playground.
- The teachers expect you to do well and help you to do so by giving you work that is quite hard, but not too hard.
- They keep a very close eye on how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it.
- The adults who run the school do an excellent job. They are always checking how good the school is so that they can make it even better.

The teachers have made some excellent plans for improving the school and we are sure they will carry on working hard to help you do the very best that you can. We hope that you all continue to enjoy learning at Callis Grange and when you move on to junior school.

With very best wishes,

Carole Skinner Lead inspector

13 September 2007

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Lead inspector