

Mousehold Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120945
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313804
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	Mr James Malt
Headteacher	Ms Catherine Whalen
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2004
School address	Mousehold Avenue Norwich Norfolk NR3 4RS
Telephone number	01603 427012
Fax number	01603 487922

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Inspection number	313804

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving an inner city area of Norwich. The school changed its designation in September 2007 from a First School to an Infant School. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to claim free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is lower than average. Few pupils are known to have a first language other than English, though this number is rising. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need is lower than average overall, although evidence indicates this is not the case at the time when pupils first enter the school. There is a permanent winter site for The Showmen's Guild community within the catchment area. Indicators suggest that the school catchment also serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. The school has a 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

This is an outstandingly effective school which provides excellent value for money. Standards are high, sometimes exceptionally so, and pupils make outstanding progress whilst they are at the school. Provision in the Foundation Stage is also exemplary.

The school's success arises from the exceptionally clear vision and direction given by the headteacher and other school leaders to a remarkably committed staff team. They work extremely hard in partnership with governors and with the support of community partners to provide outstanding levels of care. This ensures that pupils achieve as well as they can, academically and personally. All individuals are highly valued in a nurturing but challenging environment in which pupils thrive and become exceptionally well rounded individuals. It is not surprising that parents are highly appreciative of the school. One wrote 'I cannot praise highly enough the staff and headmistress at Mousehold School. My children are very enthusiastic about their attendance and learning. I can honestly say I could not fault their commitment. It is an absolute joy to be part of the high standards this school offers and I have no doubt that this will shape a fabulous future for my children.' This comment echoes the views of many, including the pupils, who said that 'there is nothing we would change about our school.' Their high level of enjoyment is reflected in their good attendance.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. Because they are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept responsibilities, they grow in confidence, often beyond their years. Pupils show a remarkable knowledge of how to keep themselves and each other safe and an excellent understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The combination of excellent literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and highly developed personal attributes equips children exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Teaching is outstanding because lessons are planned meticulously, based on rigorous assessment, to take pupils' learning forward from their previous level. Teachers constantly reflect and look for ways to improve further. As a consequence, some have introduced exceptionally effective ways of feeding back to children how well they have done and of helping them to evaluate the quality of their own work. These strategies are not yet applied consistently across school. Pupils benefit greatly from an inspirational curriculum that is planned carefully to ensure that learning is matched closely to the needs of every individual in school. Those who find learning more difficult receive excellent support from class teachers and able teaching assistants so that they make outstanding progress.

There is exceptional leadership at all levels. Expectations are high and challenging targets are set and achieved. Consequently, pupils make outstanding progress, often from well below average starting points, to achieve consistently high and sometimes exceptionally high standards. The school has successfully tackled the issues from the previous inspection, maintained high standards and made significant strides forward. It has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is because of the excellent support and knowledge of staff. From the very beginning, children and their families

are made to feel welcome, highly valued and confident. Highly effective arrangements for home visits ensure that children arrive happy and ready to learn. They make excellent progress because of the outstanding teaching and curriculum. Carefully planned activities, based on thorough and accurate assessment, are delivered exceptionally well by teachers and teaching assistants who have an exemplary understanding of how young children learn and very high expectations for them. Every activity is related to the topic, and all areas of the curriculum are represented in the themes. These are revisited and reinforced in a range of exciting and relevant ways. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1, children have achieved the standards expected of them. Excellent leadership ensures that there is a constant drive for improvement. For example, leaders are looking forward to ensuring that the Reception children make even more effective use of the attractive outdoor area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the best practice seen in sharing feedback with pupils is applied consistently across school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter Nursery with levels of knowledge and skills which are often well below those expected for their age. They make exceptional progress throughout the school so that they consistently reach high standards and sometimes exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 2. Those pupils who find learning more difficult and those who are in the early stages of learning English are also supported extremely well to make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and love school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent because its development is embedded throughout the life and work of the school. They grow in self-awareness, think in moral terms and reflect upon their feelings and actions with a level of maturity well beyond their years. Pupils work and play together extremely well. They share ideas, listen to one another and celebrate each other's achievements. In a wide variety of ways, from fund-raising for charities to helping in the smooth day-to-day running of the school, pupils make a very full contribution to its life. They are proud of the difference they can make, for example as 'playground angels' or as members of the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers promote high levels of confidence and positive attitudes through excellent and trusting relationships and ensure that pupils work hard. Careful management ensures that their behaviour is exceptional. Work is well matched to their needs and pupils are very clear about what they need to learn. Teachers focus successfully on collaborative working, developing thinking, questioning and problem solving skills so that pupils quickly become independent and confident learners. An early approach to teaching philosophy, the 'Mantle of the Expert', is used effectively

in this regard. Highly skilled teaching assistants support individuals and groups to do extremely well. Teachers use many practical 'hands on' activities to engage pupils and allow them to practise what they have learned in a variety of ways. Exceptional subject knowledge is used in imaginative ways to ensure that high levels of interest, engagement and challenge for all. There are some exceptional examples of feedback and the involvement of pupils in evaluating their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Great care has been taken to provide a curriculum full of activities which are interesting and tailored to meet the different needs of all the pupils at Mousehold. A strong emphasis is given to developing children's important basic skills. Inspiring topics benefit their knowledge and understanding across several subjects, helping them to learn extremely well and providing them with lasting memories. These often result in art work and writing of exceptional quality. Visitors and visits extend and enliven the curriculum further. Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent and results in outstanding personal development. A wide range of popular extra-curricular provision, suggested by pupils themselves, includes the arts, sports and the promotion of life skills, including cookery and gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a very strong ethos of pastoral and academic care and support, which is immediately evident to anyone who visits the school. Much is done so that pupils settle quickly when they join the school and to ensure that they look forward positively to the next stage in their learning. The needs of all pupils are identified quickly and their progress is monitored closely in all areas so that their academic and personal needs can continue to be met exceptionally well. Clear information is shared with parents about how well pupils are progressing and school and home work extremely well together in the best interests of the pupils. This is at the heart of the positive climate for learning which contributes to outstanding achievement and personal development. The school meets current requirements for safeguarding its pupils. They say that they feel safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to if they have any worries.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher makes an outstanding contribution to school improvement by ensuring great clarity to the vision and ethos of the school and a strong strategic steer. She has successfully built the leadership and management skills of all staff, providing mentoring, support, and ensuring continuity, so that all can play their part. Consequently, leadership and management, including governance, is outstanding at all levels. The headteacher, staff and governors have a very clear picture of how well the school is doing because they have rigorous and systematic procedures for checking this. The shared understanding of the school's performance, and the commitment to continuous improvement ensure that all staff and governors are involved in school development planning so that, good as the school is, there is no complacency. For example, the school is refining its method for checking on children's progress to give a remarkable degree of detail. Parents and community partners are extremely supportive of the

school's work and are involved extremely well in the life of the school resulting in greatly improved opportunities for the pupils.

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?	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	2
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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mousehold Infant and Nursery School, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 4RS.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

There are lots of things that we like about your school. Some of them are:

- you achieve higher standards and make much better progress than most children
- you behave extremely well and get on very well with each other
- you really enjoy school and the school is very good at organising lots of interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after
- your headteacher, and all of the other people who help run your school, are extremely good at making sure that you get an outstanding education.

We agree with your parents that you go to an outstanding school. All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that the most important thing to do next is to make sure that the best ways we saw teachers feeding back to you about your work and helping you to check your own work so that you make even better progress are used by everyone across school.

We certainly enjoyed talking with you and finding out all about your school. Keep on working hard, doing your very best and enjoying your time at school.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector