

Sparhawk Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120999
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313830
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	109
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Palmer
Headteacher	Miss Carina Ingham
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sparhawk Avenue Sprowston Norwich Norfolk NR7 8BU

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2008
Inspection number	313830

Telephone number
Fax number

01603 406406
01603 406406

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sparhawk Infant and Nursery is smaller than average with 109 pupils currently on the register. The school has recently been reorganised from a First School to an Infant and Nursery School and the boys and girls who attend are now aged between three and seven. Nursery and Reception aged children are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Fewer pupils than nationally come from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of those with statements of special educational need. In some year groups, the proportion who need extra support is high, at around a half. Attainment on entry varies year-on-year, due to the small size of the school. Generally, it is below the standard expected for children's ages and, in some years, it is well below. The school has been awarded with the Activemark, Eco School and Healthy School awards. It is a registered 'Heart Start School' with the British Heart Foundation and the local health authority. It is also involved in a local authority Well-Being initiative for staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Leadership and management are good and school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The vision and determination of the headteacher, well supported by governors, has ensured that there has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and the school is well placed to build upon its many strengths still further in the future. There is a very strong emphasis on the development of pupils' personal and social skills, which are outstanding. Each individual is valued and staff work exceptionally well with parents and other agencies to ensure pupils' well-being, so that they settle into school happily and gain in confidence and motivation. Care and guidance are good and pupils say how happy and safe they feel in this caring school. There is effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure they are fully included in all activities. There are outstanding links with the community outside school, including local and national charities and support groups. A good example of this is seen where the school has trained staff, pupils and parents in the emergency use of the defibrillator, which it holds for local community use.

From below average entry levels, all pupils, including those who find learning harder and those who are gifted and talented, make good overall progress. As a consequence, standards in writing and mathematics are in line with the average by the end of Year 2. However, they are not as good as standards in reading, which are slightly above those expected because pupils make particularly good progress here. Parents are very supportive of the school and value its work greatly. One parent reflected the views of many, saying that 'Sparhawk is an absolutely wonderful school, ensuring each child has a chance to shine!'

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers build good relationships with pupils and work hard to make lessons fun. Support staff also make a very positive contribution in ensuring that pupils who find learning harder, or those with disabilities, are fully involved in lessons. There has been a good level of improvement in marking, which is regular and informative. Assessment systems for monitoring pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics have been refined and enable leaders and managers to track the progress of individuals and groups easily, so that they can ensure that all are making the best possible progress. The school has now identified the need similarly to refine assessment and tracking in other subjects.

The curriculum is well planned and has a clear emphasis on the development of personal and social skills and of literacy and numeracy, healthy lifestyles and fitness. It is enriched very effectively with a well considered range of activities including trips, visitors and clubs. These are enjoyed greatly by pupils, who talk about activities such as the cookery club and the residential visit for Year 2, with great enthusiasm.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for young children in the EYFS is well led and managed. As a result, boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment settle into school routines quickly and happily and get a good start to their education. At the time of the inspection, many children had only recently joined the Nursery and Reception classes. Despite this, they are already working confidently and happily and co-operating well with each other. Children make good progress from their starting points and the majority reach the standards expected by the time that they move to Year 1.

Teachers and support staff work in close liaison with parents, keeping them regularly informed of children's progress and gaining their trust and confidence. Parents are positive in their views and appreciate this open and friendly approach. Good arrangements exist to ensure the health and safety of children and the development of their awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. Learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is based on a good range of practical, 'hands-on' activities, with lots of opportunities to gain confidence and skills, both indoors and outside. This has a major impact on children's learning. There is a suitable emphasis on children taking responsibility and making choices in their learning. However, on occasion, activities are too structured and, as a result, limit opportunities for children to find things out for themselves. On these occasions, children's progress is satisfactory. Staff evaluate children's progress in learning and plan activities to meet their learning needs well. They give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills. Children play and work well, both on their own and together. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they are learning and are developing confidence to explain what they are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics to match those in reading.
- Refine tracking systems to monitor pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in EYFS and achieve well in all areas of the curriculum for their age. In Key Stage 1, pupils of all levels of ability continue to make good overall progress towards challenging targets and particularly good progress in reading. While standards in reading are above average, standards in writing and mathematics are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. Boys and girls from different groups, including those who are potentially higher attaining or need extra support with their learning, achieve in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school immensely and enjoy talking about it. The school works exceptionally well to support all pupils' understanding of the need for simple and fair rules, democratic principles and how all can work together to make a positive contribution, within the school and the wider community. As a result, pupils accept responsibility willingly and develop an exceptionally good awareness of citizenship for their age. During inspection, school council members were monitoring energy use, such as lights and computer screens, to make sure there was no waste. Behaviour is excellent and boys and girls from all groups work together well for the benefit of all. They have a good awareness of health and safety issues and put this knowledge into practice in their daily routines. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent due to the very high emphasis placed upon this aspect of development by all staff. Attendance is good. Outstanding relationships based on mutual respect and trust, support pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for others. Pupils make good progress in the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This, together with their very good capacity to work constructively as members of a class team, prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good gains in their learning because of the overall good quality of teaching. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and plan lessons carefully to ensure they capture the interest and enthusiasm of boys and girls alike. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and involve them effectively through careful questioning and opportunities for practical activities. Pupils who find learning more difficult and those with disabilities get good support from skilled teaching assistants, so they achieve well in line with their peers. The school has worked recently to refine marking of work by teachers. It is regular and accurate and gives pupils good information about how to make their work even better. However, on occasion, the quality of written exemplars by adults for pupils, in books or on displays, does not provide the highest possible quality for them to emulate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school places an appropriately high emphasis on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics, which results in them making good progress in these core subjects. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to develop skills and knowledge in non-core areas of the curriculum. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils' personal development is effectively planned, including learning about how to stay healthy and keep safe. The basic curriculum is effectively supplemented by a very good range of extra activities that pupils can take part in voluntarily, such as learning to play a musical instrument, cookery, playing football or learning French. Boys and girls from Reception upwards take part in these sessions with great enjoyment. In addition, pupils in Year 2 take part in an annual residential visit. The school development plan has highlighted the need further to develop creativity, initially in art, as a medium for helping pupils to make even better gains in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school takes effective steps to help children settle into Nursery and Reception and to help older pupils transfer to their next stage of education. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils fully meet current requirements. Routines are well established and known to all. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils have targets in literacy and mathematics, which provide them with their next steps in learning, although not all pupils can confidently say what these are. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who require additional help with their work. Good use is made of strong links with other agencies, which benefit pupils' learning effectively. Pupils with disabilities are integrated exceptionally well into all aspects of school life. Systems to monitor pupils' progress are developed and have been refined effectively for the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics. The school has now identified the need to further develop the tracking of pupils' progress in science and other non-core subjects to ensure each pupil does as well as they might.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Day-to-day management is good and the school runs smoothly and efficiently. Leadership is good. Evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, spearheaded by the headteacher, provide a well-informed and perceptive basis for future planning. Targets for development are suitably challenging and focus effectively on raising standards still further. A number of members of the governing body and teaching staff have recently been appointed, and so induction and further training has been planned. Overall, governors are well informed and provide good support for the school, with many governors maintaining regular contact with classes. The governing body effectively holds the school to account and is keen to identify ways in which it can further develop its role. Excellent partnerships with other schools, outside agencies, parents and the wider community, effectively promote learners' well-being, including for those with learning difficulties. Equality of opportunity is promoted exceptionally well. The school enjoys very good support from parents and the community. Parents are particularly pleased that their children enjoy school and make good progress, and that they can readily approach the headteacher or staff to discuss any concerns.

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
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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School, Sprowston, NR7 8BU.

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited Sparhawk recently and for telling me all about your school. I would like to tell you what I found out about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. There are many good things about your school. Some of them are:

- you make good progress in writing and mathematics and particularly good progress in learning to read
- your behaviour is excellent and you all support each other really well
- your school has excellent links with other groups in the community which helps you and which also helps you to help others
- teachers make lessons interesting and give you good information on what you have done well and what you need to do next to do even better
- the adults in your school all take good care of you
- you learn a lot about being healthy and looking after yourselves well
- there is a very good range of extra activities, such as the Year 2 residential visit and clubs that make learning interesting
- your headteacher knows you all well and works hard to make your school even better.

Your headteacher and staff are always working to improve things for you. I agree with them that the most important things to try to make even better are:

- for you all to reach even higher standards in your writing and mathematics
- for teachers to keep careful records of your progress in other subjects, just like they do in literacy and numeracy, so that they can easily see how well you are all doing.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours Sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector