

Calcot Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109931
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325057
Inspection date	10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Paula Protherough

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)	219
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Katie Dean
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Curtis Road Calcot Reading RG31 4XG
Telephone number	01189 418189
Fax number	01189 418189

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Does the school provide a curriculum that sufficiently motivates and challenges all groups of pupils, including boys and girls, so that they can apply and develop their skills of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT)?
- How effectively do senior leaders, teachers and governors promote community cohesion?
- Does the school's work with other parents and carers, agencies, schools and services support personal development so that pupils attend regularly and achieve well?
- Does the Early Years Foundation Stage meet the need of boys and girls so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education?

Evidence was gathered from school and national data, observations of lessons and playtimes, pupils' work, discussion with and information from pupils, staff, parents and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors 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

This school is a large infant school with an attached Early Years Foundation Stage which comprises a Nursery class with two part-time sessions, and two full-time Reception classes. Although the majority of pupils are White British, there are pupils from a wide range of other ethnic groups, many of whom speak languages other than English at home. The average proportions of pupils who have statements of special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities include those with autism and hearing impairment.

The school is in the early stages of a soft federation with Calcot Junior School with two separate headteachers and governing bodies. There is a new Children's Centre on the school site. There is an after-school care facility which is not managed by the governing body. The school has achieved several national awards including Artsmark Gold and the Challenge Award for gifted and talented pupils.

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 which, as one parent said, 'always has the children's best interests at heart'. For many years, pupils have reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average by the time they are seven. Many pupils enter the school at the early stages in their development of mathematics and writing skills and with less mature personal and social skills. The well-planned provision in the Nursery and Reception classes means that by the time they move into Year 1 they have made accelerated progress and many are in line with age-related expectations. This good progress continues as they move through the school so they are all well prepared for the next stage of their education. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils who have additional learning needs make excellent progress because of the effective support they receive.

The assessment and tracking system for pupils from before their entrance to school through each year group is exceptionally effective in identifying the additional needs of each pupil. This includes provision for the more able pupils and those who have special talents. For example, the more able pupils are involved in research work and this develops their thinking and provides opportunities for independent work on special projects. Adults in school then ensure that each pupil receives the close attention, challenge and support they need to help them make good progress. Most parents appreciate this care and the detailed knowledge of their children and agree that personal development of pupils is good. However, a significant group felt that communication with the school could be better and the school has started to focus on how this can be improved. For example, the school is planning home visits for the new Nursery class entrants and intends to use the school website more effectively.

The school has undertaken several recent initiatives for the benefit of pupils. For example, the developing links with the Children's Centre and neighbouring junior school are helping the school to support families as well as creating new learning opportunities for pupils and staff. The headteacher, teachers and support staff have successfully raised standards in reading since the last inspection.

Teaching is good because of consistent practice in all year groups aided by effective joint planning and good teamwork. All teachers focus on developing targets with pupils so that they understand what they are learning. This well planned feature of every lesson means that pupils confidently explain what their targets are and how to improve their work. Teachers use ICT effectively to extend learning and pupils use computers in the new ICT suite to enhance their work. The school has focused intensively on helping pupils develop joined cursive handwriting from Nursery onwards and this is benefiting Years 1 and 2, where boys and girls confidently write in a variety of genres from stories about 'Peter Pan' to leaflets about their school. However, presentation of this work is not always consistent and here expectations are sometimes not high enough. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their high-quality writing or to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum are not yet firmly established.

Specialist teachers and artists enhance the curriculum and this is a creative school which is bright and colourful and where displays celebrate pupils' achievements. Exciting artwork is displayed around the school. There are many enrichment activities including day visits and Year 2 pupils enthusiastically described the animals they had seen at a wildlife park. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to follow up these visits with extended, high-quality work and links across subjects.

Pupils appreciate their school and thoroughly enjoy all of the opportunities planned for them. In every class, there are harmonious relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils are well managed by adults who, though caring and sympathetic, have high expectations of how they should behave in lessons and around school. Pupils respond well to this and their behaviour is exceptional. Throughout the school, pupils are lively, interested, polite and friendly. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and minimise the effects of families taking long holidays and now attendance is close to the national average. Assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development and from the Reception class onwards pupils are encouraged to talk about their feelings. There are productive links with the local and wider community as seen in the joint music festival for Year 2 during the inspection. Pupils have a keen sense of 'belonging' within the school because the school celebrates the diversity of its pupils. They are encouraged to learn about the lives of people in other countries and projects such as the Eco-School encourage their understanding of how to be responsible members of society.

The highly committed headteacher, senior leaders and newly organised governing body have a well thought-out plan for development which is securely focused on improving outcomes for all of its pupils. The school is well managed and effective and leaders are aware of the direction they wish to take. The planned curriculum review and recently developed relationships with the partner federated school and the Children's Centre, are examples of the actions taken by leaders to purposefully move the school forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. A significant number have low levels of language, communication and social skills. Children make good progress in the Nursery which continues into the Reception classes. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, the majority of pupils achieve the expected levels and some exceed them.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding because it is firmly based on developing children's early language and social skills in a creative way. For example, children in the Nursery class worked well together during a 'hunt' for mathematical shapes buried in the sand pit. As they found the shapes, they discussed and sorted them by size, shape and colour. In the Reception class, children extremely enthusiastically looked for mini-beasts in the outside area and discussed them with each other and adults. Not only did this contribute well to their scientific knowledge and skills but also to their language, social and spiritual development. A particular strength is the way the adults observe children to assess and identify individual needs. This informs their planning for activities and promotes well-focused support and challenge for the more able. Good use is made of the outside areas to extend learning beyond the classroom. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The Reception and Nursery leaders work well together and ensure that there is a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage into Year 1. They have maintained the quality of provision during extended staff absences. Overall, links with parents are positive. However, the inspectors agree with the large number of parents who feel that communication between home and school could be more informative.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to use their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Build the partnership with parents by increasing the scope and quality of communication.

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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?	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?	2
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?	1
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	2
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	1

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?	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
The extent to which 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	2
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

21 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Calcot Infant School and Nursery, Reading, RG31 4XG

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and you made us feel very welcome. It was good to hear you talking about what you are learning so enthusiastically. You really helped us to find out about your school. We agree with you and your parents that your teachers are good at helping you to learn so that you are ready to go to the junior school able to read and write, and understand mathematics very well. Your joined-up handwriting is especially good and should help you when you move to the junior school. You also understand what you are learning and know your targets, which help you work hard and make good progress.

The adults in school look after you extremely well so that you feel safe and well cared for, which is why you are exceptionally kind and caring towards each other in lessons and at playtimes. Your behaviour is excellent. You really enjoy your lessons and your work and especially the extra things that happen in school, such as special visitors or events like the music festival.

We have asked your headteacher to see if she can make the school even better by:

- asking your teachers to give you more chances to write and solve mathematical problems in other lessons
- finding more ways of telling your parents about the good things that are happening in your school.

Perhaps you could help by writing your own newsletter or by putting some work on the school website and information board in the playground.

I hope that you enjoy your visit to the other school and wish you well in the future.

Yours faithfully

Paula Protherough

Lead Inspector