

Doddinghurst Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114969
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326100
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	174
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	Mr Peter Chatten-Berry
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Doddinghurst Brentwood Essex CM15 0NJ
Telephone number	01277 822721
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Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that of other schools. These are mainly for speech and communication difficulties and a range of medical needs. When they join the school, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have skills and knowledge that are generally above those expected for their age.

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 where every day is packed with fun-filled work and activities. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. Parents are very supportive of the school and many help in class and in other activities. One parent described 'this delightful village school' as being at the heart of the local community.

Pupils make excellent progress and achieve outstandingly, whatever their starting point. By the time they leave Year 2, almost half have reached standards that are well above those usually seen in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in other subjects are also very high.

Parents report, 'There are many exciting and different opportunities for the children in each year group to participate in.' Inspection evidence supports this and, as a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as is teaching and the curriculum. Pupils are very polite, friendly and confident. They are extremely enthusiastic about learning and keen to share their views and ideas. They have a thorough understanding of keeping healthy and safe and enjoy looking after one another. They make an excellent contribution to the community, both in school and in the local area, through events such as parents to lunch and tea for the village. These events, coupled with their enthusiasm for working together and the high standards they reach, means that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

One parent wrote, 'Each child is made to feel special as an individual and as a valued member of the school.' This is because each teacher forms excellent relationships with their class. Work and activities are planned to meet the needs of all members of the class and pupils are encouraged to assess how much they have understood at the end of each lesson. Teachers provide many extra activities to make learning exciting for pupils and parents appreciate this. There are many visits into the local area and visitors that enrich learning.

The pupils benefit from outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher rises to the challenge of maintaining very high standards by setting clear plans for moving the school forward. The progress that each child makes is carefully tracked and any needs, educational or medical, are fully met. Each class has targets in English and mathematics and the pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. The progress pupils are making towards these targets is displayed in a fun and thoughtful way so that pupils know how well they are doing. This means that the pupils are cared for, guided and supported in an outstanding way. Governors are very knowledgeable. They support the school very effectively and have a thorough understanding of what needs to be done in order to develop the already outstanding provision. The issues from the last inspection have been tackled successfully and there is excellent capacity to improve further with all staff committed to maintaining this as an extremely successful school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to school life in the Reception classes. Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in an induction system that ensures children settle into school quickly and make friends easily. Every child is given many opportunities to visit the school, meet the staff and become accustomed to choosing activities and learning their way around the building. Older children are assigned to the younger ones to ensure that they feel safe in the playground. Basic skills in early reading and writing, mathematics, and information and

communication technology (ICT) are taught extremely effectively. As a result, children are confident writers, using their skills to form letters correctly and write sentences. They count accurately and learn about simple addition and subtraction. Dedicated computer sessions ensure that children become familiar with a range of programs and confidently use technology. By the time they leave the Reception class most children have reached the expected goals for their learning and about one third are working at National Curriculum levels. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Assessments are thorough and activities planned very effectively to meet the needs of all of the children, whatever their age or ability. The best use is made of the accommodation, although the space for outside play is limited. The school is beginning to look at how this can be tackled so that children's learning can be extended outside.

What the school should do to improve further

- Pursue plans to develop the outside area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that their learning can be extended beyond the classroom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are much higher than usually seen in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the trend over many years and current standards are no different. Pupils of all abilities achieve extremely well and their progress is excellent. Standards in other subjects are also much higher than usually seen in infant schools. Exciting and stimulating displays around the school show how much pupils have learnt about artists, such as Jackson Pollack. School productions help pupils to reach very high standards in performing and singing to a wide audience. Excellent use of the ICT suite means that pupils are confident publishing their work, changing fonts and colours and cutting and pasting images into their work. Pupils who find learning difficult make excellent progress because they are exceptionally well supported in lessons and sessions are designed to tackle their specific needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school immensely. They are very friendly, considerate and show great respect towards each other and to adults. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they learn as a result of the outstanding teaching and the outstanding curriculum. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Levels of attendance are well above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They greatly appreciate celebrating natural beauty through art, gardening and preparing for the village horticultural shows. They work together extremely well and listen attentively to each other. They have an excellent understanding of other cultures and enjoy learning about other countries. They are also very proud of the money they raise for different charities both nationally and in the wider world.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. They are very aware of healthy diets and a good number participate keenly in the after school sporting activities. Pupils enjoy weekly swimming sessions in the summer term, using the school pool. Pupils feel very pleased when given special responsibilities around the school. They consider themselves very much part of the local community, performing concerts for local senior citizens and participating in recycling initiatives. Pupils are very happy and have a genuine willingness to do their best, to

help others and develop their own independence. These values, together with very high standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT, means they are being extremely well prepared for the next stages of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress because teachers plan lessons that are enlivening and stimulating. The purpose of each session is clearly explained and activities are carefully and sensitively planned to meet the needs of all groups in each class. Pupils are challenged. They enjoy extending their learning by deciding which activity they will attempt and assess for themselves how much they understand. Marking is very effective and helps pupils improve further. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them and note how much progress the pupils have made towards their targets. Relationships are excellent and pupils are very enthusiastic about learning. Work is displayed throughout the school and many displays are added to regularly as pupils learn more about a whole variety of subjects and themes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has developed a very creative and imaginative curriculum. New strategies have helped teachers to plan very exciting and relevant ways to link pupils' learning across different subjects. The school proudly displays attractive examples of pupils' work linking many subjects together. Opportunities for enrichment, through the many extra-curricular activities and local events, such as the school and village fairs, are outstanding. Pupils learn about communities further afield and this helps them to understand different cultural perspectives. Art, music and dance play a key part in the school's vibrant learning environment with high quality performances in and out of school. Teachers and teaching assistants adjust provision to ensure that pupils who find learning difficult do not miss out on any aspect of the exciting curriculum. Links with the local high school and other schools are excellent and support learning very well particularly in dance and sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent quality of the caring and supportive environment helps all groups of pupils to thrive and flourish. This high level of care is much appreciated by parents. Partnerships with a range of agencies support particular families well when necessary. Staff sensitively provide additional medical care when it is needed, so that all pupils feel safe and valued. There are excellent procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe. Checks on the suitability of staff and procedures for child protection meet requirements fully. Teachers and teaching assistants use assessment information very effectively to identify and support pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils have personal targets in literacy and mathematics and these are reinforced in lessons and pupils know what they have to do to improve. Pupils regularly evaluate their own achievement at the end of lessons. Extra challenges are set for the more able pupils in a range of subjects, enabling them to reach the higher levels. Excellent targeted support is given to pupils who need extra help with learning and this enables them to achieve exceptionally well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Pupils are very successful because the school is extremely well led and managed. The headteacher has been most successful in creating a team that supports each other and works together to provide the best education possible for the pupils. The progress that each child makes is tracked accurately and excellent support put in place should any fall behind. They quickly catch up and very high standards are maintained. The senior leadership team has a very accurate view of where the school's strengths lie and where improvements are needed. Governance is excellent. Governors are very supportive of the school and play a key role in improving provision. The programme to promote community cohesion is excellent. Pupils learn about the local area and provide events for local people. Parents enjoy the opportunity they have to eat lunch with their children every week and there are plans to extend this to others in the community. Pupils learn about the cultures and beliefs of others and demonstrate a very good understanding about the various religious faiths. One parent summed up the school by saying, 'the headteacher and all her staff do an excellent job'.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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/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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Doddinghurst Infant School, Brentwood, CM15 0NJ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your outstanding school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

There are so many exceptional things about your school. You make excellent progress in your work and reach very high standards in many subjects. This is because your teachers have thought of ways to make lessons and learning exciting and fun. They have created an outstanding curriculum and provide excellent levels of care and support. Many of your parents wrote and told us how much they appreciate this.

You clearly love your school and your attendance levels are excellent. You show a great deal of respect for each other and your behaviour is outstanding. You have raised a lot of money for charity and do such a lot to help your village with concerts and the Horticultural Show.

Teachers help you by setting targets and marking your work extremely well. You clearly know what you have to do to improve. Your artwork is impressive, with colourful displays for you to enjoy.

There is just one thing that we have asked your headteacher to do to make your school even better. We have asked her to look into improving the outside area for the children in the Reception classes so that they can learn outside, whatever the weather.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best in the future.

Best wishes

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector