

Jerounds Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115023
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326114
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	210
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	Mrs Jean Clark
Headteacher	Mrs Katherine Holland
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pyenest Road Harlow Essex CM19 4PH
Telephone number	01279 423485
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small Infant school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and most of these pupils have severe learning difficulties or physical difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), their attainment is below what is expected for their age, although this is not the case for all children. The school has recently gained the Active Mark, the Inclusion Quality Mark and reawarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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. Parents cannot praise it highly enough. They appreciate the way that the school reaches out to them. Typical of many, a parent wrote 'I am absolutely delighted with the school. My children are incredibly happy and have progressed brilliantly!' The pupils agree saying 'Learning is fun here and all the children are friendly.'

Fundamental to the school's success is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported by senior staff. She has built a strong and committed team who constantly search for ways to improve what is already of high quality. Staff take on new initiatives willingly, such as the special news-writing sessions, and adapt them to meet the needs of the pupils. This extra focus on writing means that last year, standards were exceptionally high in writing. The school regularly monitors, evaluates and improves everything that it does to ensure it is of high quality. Consequently, subject leaders have an excellent understanding of their subjects. The governors have a good view of the school. They are beginning to ask challenging questions to ensure the best possible education for the pupils. This is a school where every pupil is important. The exceptional care, support and guidance offered underpin the caring, family atmosphere. The progress of individual pupils is regularly assessed to make sure that help is provided for any who are falling behind and extra support given to those who are shooting ahead.

Given all this, it is not surprising that pupils' achievement is excellent. In 2008, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. All pupils, including those who find it harder to develop literacy and numeracy skills and those who speak English as an additional language, make excellent progress from what, for many, are low starting points.

There are several reasons why pupils do so very well. The school aims high and works towards excellence in teaching and learning throughout the school. Most teaching is of the highest quality and challenges the pupils. Support staff give very effective support, particularly to individuals and small groups. Excellent relationships mean that pupils are confident in asking questions or giving reasons for their answers. Occasionally, lessons do not reach the school's very high expectations; for example, where pupils are not given enough independence. There is a very strong focus on the basic skills, and expectations are very high. In return, pupils behave exceptionally well and try hard to succeed. They thoroughly enjoy the very rich curriculum, with its strong emphasis on learning through play. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy through their 'wake up, shake up' sessions each morning and say that they feel very safe in school. They develop a respect for, and understanding of, people from different backgrounds and walks of life. The range of responsibilities that the pupils willingly accept is unusual for an infant school. For example, they have a strong voice and know that they can influence what happens in their school. The vibrant adventure playground illustrates this because it was planned and designed by them. They have an excellent foundation for their future life because of the emphasis on basic skills and the many opportunities to understand money and learn about the jobs that may be open to them.

This is a school where no one is complacent. All are continually seeking improvement. Its self-evaluation is accurate and the progress since the previous inspection shows that the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents recognise the flying start that their children make. One wrote 'I am very happy sending my child to this warm, caring and stimulating school.' In their first weeks in school the children happily join in all the exciting activities on offer. They make excellent progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most have reached the early learning goals set for them nationally, and some have exceeded them. They do so well because the teaching is of very high quality and adults give the children plenty of attention, often in very small groups. Every opportunity for learning is taken, such as counting raisins at snack time. Tasks are very closely matched to the children's needs and there is a strong emphasis on social skills. For example, children happily place their photograph beside their chosen activity on the activity board, amending their choice if the activity is already too busy. Their behaviour is excellent because adults make their expectations clear. The children thrive in a relaxed but secure environment where they are encouraged to develop their skills through teacher-led and child-initiated activities. The outdoor areas have been significantly improved recently and provide delightful places where children can learn and play. Excellent leadership of the EYFS ensures that the curriculum is well planned and that all the necessary welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the excellent practice in teaching and learning is consistent throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards have risen steadily over the last four years. In 2008, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and well above in writing at the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils who did much better than is usual for their age was well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This is because the school monitors each pupil's progress very closely to meet their needs. Pupils who need extra help to learn and those who speak English as an additional language do extremely well because they receive such effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school enormously. They feel valued and are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. They want to come to school. Attendance is above the national average. They are very friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. They listen to each other and reflect on the themes of assemblies, such as 'saying sorry and making things right.' The school is a harmonious community and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils develop the skills needed to live together, respecting and appreciating differences in culture and faiths. They demonstrate outstanding care for others by fundraising and supporting a range of charities. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is encouraged and pupils are very aware of the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. 'Chips have too much salt and make you fat,' said one pupil. Pupils make an effective contribution to the school community. Older pupils take very seriously their roles as lunchtime monitors and playground buddies. There is a very active school council, which

provides an excellent forum for pupils to express their views, and staff listen to and act upon them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers have very high expectations and use interesting methods to motivate the pupils. The pace of lessons is very brisk and pupils show an excitement about learning. Behaviour is managed extremely well. Talented teaching assistants are very effective and the high ratio of adults to pupils contributes positively to the high standards because each pupil receives the help needed to do well. This is particularly the case for pupils who find it hard to learn and those who are learning to speak English. Excellent assessment procedures mean that teachers have a thorough knowledge of the needs of each pupil. They divide pupils in Year 2 into groups across the classes according to their ability in reading, writing and mathematics and match tasks closely to their needs. This also contributes to the rising standards. Pupils have a depth of understanding for their own learning that is unusual for such young children. This is because teachers tell them the aims for the lesson and help them to know when they have met them. In a few lessons, pupils need more opportunities to work independently, rather than be supported, to ensure that all teaching and learning is outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the pupils' needs exceptionally well because it is based on what makes them want to learn. This includes structured, purposeful play across the school and topics designed to excite and motivate. For example, 'Super Heroes' captures the imagination in one class and contributes to very good progress in their talking, reading and writing. Provision for literacy and numeracy is very well planned. Pupils have very good opportunities to use technology such as computers and electronic devices in different subjects. A very well planned programme of social and health education ensures that pupils learn how to be safe and healthy. A wide range of clubs is well attended and gives pupils opportunities to learn new skills, including the popular 'signing club.' Pupils' enthusiastic participation in these activities strongly boosts their confidence and skills. The school makes very good use of the local community to enhance learning. For example, during a visit to a local park the pupils were encouraged to reflect on why natural objects are the colour they are. The curriculum also encourages the pupils to look beyond their immediate locality and learn about cultures and beliefs different from their own. An annual 'Around the World' week, culminating in an 'Around the World Cafe' is just part of a series of well-planned activities to develop an awareness and understanding of how other people live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils value the extremely caring and nurturing ways of working. Rigorous procedures ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Child protection arrangements are well established. The school fosters a high level of self-esteem in the pupils and this contributes significantly to their positive attitude to learning. Excellent tracking systems allow teachers to match work to the pupils' needs. This is a major factor in their excellent achievement.

Pupils have their own targets and marking in books helps them to improve. They have a clear understanding of how they are doing, and are keen to accomplish the goals that teachers set. Pupils who are at risk or who need additional support are identified early and very effective strategies to meet their needs are put in place by a strong team of support staff. There are excellent strategies for promoting the involvement of parents at every stage of their children's education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, senior staff and governors set very high standards for what the school can achieve. Thorough monitoring and evaluation of everything the school does, enables a swift identification of priorities for development. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored and the feedback given to teachers to help them improve is of very high quality. Everyone in the school works as an effective team, sharing the headteacher's vision for continued improvement. The well-being of the pupils is at the heart of all it does and this is particularly appreciated by parents. It actively fosters a sense of community, both within school and outside. Subject leaders fulfil their roles extremely effectively, contributing to the way that standards have been rising in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years. The governors fulfil their role well and are becoming more confident in challenging the school to ensure that it moves on even further. They know that their decision to fund a high number of support staff contributes well to the high standards.

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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	2
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	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 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	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

8 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Jerounds Community Infant School, Harlow, CM19 4PH

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that you like coming to school and that learning is fun. We agree with you. We thought that you were very good at your 'wake up, shake up' activities, which help you to keep fit. All the grown-ups look after you extremely well. You make excellent progress as you move through the school and do better than many children of your age. This is because your teachers give you work that is just right for you and they help you to enjoy learning. They also watch to see how well you are doing and give you help when you need it. The teaching assistants give you plenty of help, especially if you find it hard to learn. We think that you have an excellent understanding in lessons of what and how you learn. We thought your behaviour was excellent. You enjoy all the opportunities you have and we were impressed by what you chose for your adventure playground. Your headteacher and the governors work very hard to make sure that your school is a lovely place to be. Your families know that you go to one of the best schools.

Your headteacher and your teachers want all your lessons to be excellent every day. This is quite hard but we have asked Mrs Holland to help this to happen. You can help by continuing to do your best.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Jerounds Infant School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector