

Hatherley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115484
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326204
Inspection dates	16-17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Nash
Headteacher	Kate Heslegrave
Date of previous school inspection	15-16 June 2006
School address	Hatherley Road Gloucester GL1 4PW
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, the school development plan, safeguarding policies, the governing body meeting minutes and 31 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The achievement of pupils in mathematics.
- The achievement of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs.
- The impact of the governors on the outcomes of the school.
- The extent to which the pupils gain an awareness of different socio-economic groupings within their community.

Information about the school

This small school serves the surrounding area which consists of mainly privately rented and social housing. Approximately one third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Two-thirds of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, one third of which use English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Their needs are moderate and relate mainly to speech, language and communication skills.

The school admits up to 60 children into the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children transfer into one of the two adjoining Reception classes from the children's centre which shares the same site as the school. There have been recent changes to the governing body and a significant minority are new to the role.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

At the heart of this outstanding school is the excellent level of care and support given to individuals. This enables them to develop into confident youngsters who are eager and keen to learn.

Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their individual needs are extremely well catered for. Provision in Years 1 and 2 is exceptional in:

- curricular planning
- care, support and guidance
- the use of assessment to help pupils in their learning.

This results in standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils make excellent progress from when they start school. The slight difference in the pupils' attainment between English and mathematics skills has been successfully rectified through focused intervention groups and specific support for individuals. Exceptionally high quality marking and monthly assessment tests ensure that the pupils know exactly what they need to do to move onto the next step of their learning. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally well managed and very well focused education plans ensure that these individuals make the same rate of progress as their peers. Whilst teaching assistants provide good support to individuals and small groups, they are not always deployed to best effect in whole-class sessions.

The excellent way in which the leaders and managers communicate their drive and ambition is another contributory feature to its success. They are fully committed to working together with parents, carers and the local community to provide the best possible preparation for the children's next step in education. The curriculum fully reflects the diversity and heritage of the local area and promotes community cohesion well. It is stimulating and engaging, enabling them to fully enjoy their time at school. Their behaviour is excellent and their keenness to attend school is reflected in an improving attendance rate.

The school has an accurate view of what makes it so unique and so much part of the centre of the community. This view supports its ethos of being 'the heart of Hatherley'. It is always taking effective steps to get provision just right. For example,

the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection. The school improvement plan is driven by rigorous analysis of its own performance. The shared commitment and desire to succeed reflect the school's outstanding capacity for future improvement. Governors are very supportive but are at an early stage of independently finding out about the strengths and areas for school development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching assistant support is always used to best effect in whole-class teaching sessions.
- Enable the new governors to understand their role in challenging the work of the school by building on their individual skills and expertise.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils love, as one pupil explained, 'learning new things' and this is reflected in their eagerness and extended concentration in lessons. The pupils are exceptionally keen to participate in lessons, working very maturely with their 'talk partners' and behaving extremely well. For example, in a Year 2 literacy session the pupils enthusiastically worked in pairs helping to improve their expressive voice as they read a section from Dr Seuss' *Cat in the Hat*. They were also captivated by the use of Dr Seuss's hat to demonstrate a key learning point and were highly motivated in their work.

The outstanding outcomes are reflected in the exceptionally high standards that have been attained by the pupils in their national assessment tests over the past few years. It is evident from current Year 2 work that most pupils are working well beyond the expected level for their age group and are achieving extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes:

- both boys and girls
- pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities', including those with statements for special needs
- those for whom English is an additional language
- those from all minority ethnic groups.

As one parent explained, 'They have given my child the best possible start to education and school life.'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are reflective in their thinking and use their excellent knowledge of cultural diversity to help each other in their learning. For instance, pupils exchange with each other the differences in their religious beliefs and customs. They are extremely thoughtful and were most concerned to find out if the inspector who had been taken ill just prior to the start of the inspection was okay!

Children feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree with this. Pupils know

that when they slip any concerns into the 'worry box' it will be sorted out and their knowledge of keeping safe when using the internet is exceptional. Whole-school 'wake and shake' sessions and excellent participation in sporting opportunities help the pupils to have a very good understanding of how exercise keeps them fit. The nourishing school meals and the attention to healthy eating styles within the curriculum also enables the pupils to know why 'proteins are good for you but too many carbohydrates are bad for you'. Their excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles is reflected in Active Mark and Healthy Schools awards.

As school buddies, Year 2 pupils take on good levels of responsibility and are involved in relevant decision making with the headteacher. Selling cakes and dressing up to raise funds for charity, performing Christmas plays to local senior citizens and the pupils' dedicated commitment to walking to school indicate the outstanding contribution they make to their own school and wider community. The pupils' exceptionally high quality basic skills enable them to use their knowledge well to count money on their own stall at the school fair and ensure that they collect the correct change from their spending money when they are out on a visit. Although a significant number of families take unauthorised leave to visit their extended families abroad, the school maintains pupils' attendance at a satisfactory level because of extremely rigorous monitoring procedures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have an excellent understanding of the way in which young children learn and enjoy very positive relationships with them. This enables them to fully engage pupils in learning, thus ensuring that outstanding progress is made. The use of high quality resources, such as interesting electronic programs, motivates and challenges

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

the pupils. Teachers skilfully ask questions which assess how well each individual has understood the skills being taught, ensuring that the next lesson is planned to meet particular needs. Pupils' work is marked exceptionally well and points for development are clearly conveyed. Targets are matched extremely well to the needs of each child and reviewed on a very regular basis. However, whilst groups benefit from the support from teaching assistants, they are not deployed to best effect during whole-class sessions at the beginning or end of lessons.

The curriculum stimulates the pupils because meaningful links are made between subjects and this enables key skills to be developed within context. For example, work on the Great Fire of London was used to help the pupils develop their sequential and ordering skills in literacy. The digital photographing of plants growing enhances both the pupils' science and ICT skills. An extensive range of enrichment activities organised through a city partnership has enabled the pupils to access a wide range of opportunities that have broadened their experiences and ensure that the curriculum is brought to life. For instance, a visit to a Victorian school room enabled the pupils to compare education in the past with the present day.

Pupils get excellent care, guidance and support. The school's personal, social and health education programme has a very positive impact on the outstanding outcomes for the pupils. Staff know the pupils' individual needs very well and are able to provide tailored, high quality support to all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who use English as an additional language.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, coupled with the commitment from a stable staff, ensures that all pupils receive equal opportunities, and results in the highest quality academic and personal outcomes. Leaders and managers understand the needs of the local community exceptionally well, engaging with them all very effectively to ensure that provision fully meets individual needs. The school sets challenging targets and the effective monitoring systems enable the school to evaluate their performance accurately.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and justifiably proud of its excellent reputation within the community. New governors accurately identify the strengths of the school. However, they have yet to take full responsibility for finding out about the school for themselves or use their own personal expertise to challenge decisions made by the senior staff. The school complies with statutory requirements and ensures that children are properly safeguarded. However, leaders recognise that

there are elements of their provision, particularly in relation to governors' roles, which could be improved to ensure that their practice is good. Governors also recognise that their mechanisms for seeking the views of parents and carers are underdeveloped at present.

The school has excellent links with a wide range of outside agencies, which enables it to support those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language exceptionally well.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is a strength at local level. Pupils are proud of their school and their local community. They have an excellent knowledge of each other's religions and pupils are invited to talk about their customs and cultures to each other. They have developed a good link with a rural school elsewhere in the county but links with other socio-economic groups both locally and nationally are at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the high quality contribution it is making to increasing children's progress. Outstanding leadership and management ensure that teaching is very effective, consistent and focused on what the children need to learn. For most children this is developing basic skills from a very low level, particularly personal, social and communication skills. By the time that they leave Reception, most of their skills are in line with national averages and some exceed them. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners who receive an excellent balance of adult-led activities and those they can choose for themselves both indoors and outdoors. For example, they work with adults to look for mini-beasts outside and enjoy serving tea and cakes to their friends in the class café area. Day-to-day assessment is exceptionally strong and planning is carefully adapted to meet the needs of those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the school. They accurately cited as particular strengths the high academic standards attained and the excellent progress made by their children. Parents praised the way in which the school cared for individuals and was culturally very inclusive; as one parent explained, 'a very friendly place for my child to grow up'.

A very small minority of parents raised concerns about teaching assistants and inspectors found evidence to support this. A few felt that links with the junior schools could be better and felt that it would be better if Hatherley was a primary school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hatherley Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 31 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 141 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	2	1	1

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



18 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Hatherley Infant School, Gloucester, GL1 4PW

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave my team when we came to your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Hatherley. We would like to say a special thank you to those pupils who talked to us about your school.

Hatherley provides you with an excellent education. Your work is of an exceptionally high standard and your achievement throughout the school is outstanding. This is because you are taught well and the care and support you are given is exceptional. Your teachers help you to improve your work because they give you helpful suggestions and set you targets to meet. You enjoy learning about an excellent range of topics and find the work exciting and challenging. Visits to the local docks and trips to a food factory help you to understand your local heritage.

It is very clear that you take a full part in the life of the school and are eager to come to school. We enjoyed hearing about how the Year 2 buddies look after the younger children and we were impressed with how much you knew about each other's religious celebrations. You feel safe because the school looks after you extremely well and any worries are quickly dealt with. You are very knowledgeable about how to keep your body fit and we were impressed with the way you could talk about what foods are good for you to eat.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do an excellent job. They make sure that you receive the best possible education. We have asked your teachers to help the teaching assistants to be more involved at the start and finish of lessons. We have also asked your new governors to build on their own skills and ask the teachers more about school life.

We know you were disappointed not to meet the inspector who had planned to accompany me. He sends his best wishes to you and thanks you for the concern you showed towards his injury. Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure Hatherley gets even better.

Yours faithfully

Lorna Brackstone HMI

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