

Malvern Way Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117133
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326532
Inspection dates	29–30 January 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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	302
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 Ann Palmer
Headteacher	Mrs Janet English
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Malvern Way Croxley Green Rickmansworth WD3 3QQ

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average Infant and Nursery school serving a suburb of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. The large majority of pupils are from a White British background but about a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, principally with an Asian heritage. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that usually found. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is similar to that 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: 2

This is a good school where pupils make good progress and enjoy learning. Parents are supportive of the school and one commented that, 'This is a large school that manages to be cohesive and children are valued as individuals.' Many parents echo this view and know that their children achieve well.

An outstanding aspect of the school is pupils' excellent personal development. They are keen to learn and behave extremely well. They have an excellent understanding about keeping healthy and safe, partly because the school promotes these through special weeks that involve all the family. The school council is very active and are extremely keen to share their achievements across the school. Through well-planned activities that promote community cohesion, pupils learn about the local area and beyond and about the cultures and beliefs of others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils' thirst for learning results in standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the trend over time, because staff identify quickly any areas that fall below this and put in place programmes that enable all pupils to achieve well, whatever their starting point or ability. They take particular care to ensure that pupils who have difficulty learning receive the support they need in order to make good progress. Standards in other subjects are also above average. In information and communication technology, pupils are confident when using a variety of programmes and the interactive whiteboards in the classroom that enrich and support their learning.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and a wide variety of extra activities and experiences supports their learning. Teachers plan their lessons well and mark work carefully so that pupils know what to do to improve their performance. Teachers set goals for pupils so they have a good understanding of what they are aiming for. Relationships throughout the school are positive and staff take excellent care of the pupils. They provide outstanding personal guidance, so that pupils' time in school is a positive, happy experience. Teaching assistants are skilled at supporting pupils who have particular needs and pupils report that there is always someone they can go to if they have a problem. They also comment that issues are soon sorted out.

Every aspect of the school's work has improved since the last inspection. This is due to the strong leadership of the headteacher. She receives effective support from her senior leadership team and governors, who know the school well. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to post, are working together effectively. The school acknowledges that they have yet to evaluate for themselves the impact they are having on pupils' achievement, and this has been identified as the next stage of their development. Consequently, the school is in a good position to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS make a good start to their education. They make good progress in all areas of learning, exceptionally so in their personal development. The highly effective induction process means that children have many opportunities to visit the school and get to know the staff. Close links have been forged with a number of pre-schools in order to make the transition into school as smooth as possible. Consequently, children settle into school routines quickly

and confidently. Staff plan tasks and activities well so that children have a good balance of those they choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Staff teach basic skills effectively. They identified letter formation as an area for improvement and a system for teaching handwriting has been devised. This means that children say a little rhyme to help them remember how to form letters correctly. However, it is very new and therefore has not yet been fully evaluated in order to assess its effectiveness. Good leadership and management have resulted in effective team work across the EYFS. Staff in the Nursery work closely with those in the Reception classes so children are consistently well cared for and achieve well throughout. Tasks and activities cover all areas of learning. The outside area is used particularly well, with boots available so that it can be used in all weather. Staff assess children's progress accurately, so that activities can be planned to meet the needs of all learners. Staff foster children's welfare exceptionally well. Consequently, children become confident learners and enjoy being in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that subject leaders develop the skills they need to evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From an average starting point pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case in the recent past, although in the 2008 assessments the standard of boys' writing was average. The school identified this and focused on writing in general in order to support boys. This has had a positive impact and boys are now keen to write and produce work that is generally above that expected. Pupils who experience difficulty learning also make good progress. There are many effective intervention programmes used by the school in order to meet individual needs and ensure that these pupils achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a thirst for learning and really enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average. Pupils have an excellent understanding of eating a balanced diet and know the benefits of exercise. They are friendly and polite and behave extremely well. They have a mature attitude and show great respect for each other. The school council are especially proud of the improvements they have introduced, particularly to the playground equipment. Pupils are particularly keen on the extra opportunities they have in school. They thoroughly enjoy the sporting activities and those that involve them helping people in the local and wider area, by raising money for various charities. They make a strong contribution to the local community by participating in events such as dance and sporting activities organised with local schools. Pupils report that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and that adults always help them resolve their issues. Pupils value the beautiful outside area and make good use of this in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are many positive aspects to teaching and learning in the school. Adults form good relationships with their pupils and provide many interesting and stimulating activities. Assessments are thorough and teachers use the information that they gain to plan lessons that meet the needs across the full range of ages and abilities in their class. The pace of most lessons is good and enables pupils to recap efficiently on what they have already learnt and move swiftly on to new learning. However, there are times when teachers do not give pupils enough indication of how much time they have to complete an activity. When this happens, pupils have little sense of urgency and the pace of learning slows. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with particular needs and are knowledgeable about how best to meet their needs. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and, as a result, any little incidents do not disrupt learning. A particularly positive aspect of pupils' learning is self-assessment. Pupils across the school are confident when evaluating their own work and that of others. They are honest and quite critical because they know what they need to do in order to reach higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has been reviewed recently and carefully planned to appeal to both boys and girls. As a result, it is exciting, motivating and pupils are keen to learn. Basic skills are taught effectively and all subjects are covered through the creative curriculum. Themed weeks are thoroughly planned so that pupils can enjoy extended times to explore and experience art and science activities. Standards in writing are rising, particularly those for boys, as themes, such as 'space', appeal to all. There are many opportunities for pupils to make visits into the local area and beyond. Some have visited Buckingham Palace and have learnt something about how the Queen lives. There are a wide variety of extra activities provided, many more than usually seen in an Infant school. These range from sporting activities, including Tri-Golf, Stacking Club and tennis coaching. There are dance sessions for all pupils and music lessons, as well as the opportunity to learn French. Although some have to be paid for, the school makes certain that all pupils have access to a variety of activities and there are waiting lists for some clubs. In order to tackle this, many clubs are arranged on a rolling programme so that all pupils have the opportunity to participate. The staff actively involve families in their provision by providing garden plots so that parents can work with their children to grow their own food. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is outstanding. Pupils have the opportunity to talk about their issues in dedicated sessions and learn about working and playing together. They develop an excellent understanding of other cultures and beliefs and learn to respect each other.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is an outstanding commitment from all staff to providing a high quality of care, academic guidance and, where necessary, personal support for all pupils. Pupils not only have goals for their learning in English and mathematics, but also have personal goals. One child was extremely excited when she achieved hers, because she had managed to eat all her dinner. Procedures to protect children are robust and safeguarding conforms to all legal requirements. The school is

a safe and welcoming place to be. Staff deal sensitively with medical problems and the school has had experience of successfully meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. She receives effective support from the senior leadership team and governors, who provide a good level of challenge and know the school well. There are outstanding links with other agencies, including health professionals who provide individual support for pupils with additional needs, and other schools so that the transition arrangements are sensitive. The school places great emphasis on involving parents and regularly carries out surveys to gain their views and ideas. The school has a clear strategy for promoting community cohesion, which involves pupils gaining a good understanding of the local and wider community and learning about cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. Staff have been successful in tracking the progress that each pupil makes to ensure that all achieve well. Staff quickly identify any who are falling behind and provide the support necessary for them to catch up. There is a great sense of teamwork across the school and this is evident in the way that the curriculum has been implemented in every class. The subject leaders have worked hard to achieve this, but have yet to evaluate the part that their individual subject is playing in raising pupils' achievement in the school.

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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?	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?	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?	1
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	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	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	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?	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?	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	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

2 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Malvern Way Infant and Nursery School, Rickmansworth, WD3 3QQ

Thank you for welcoming us into your school recently, and for telling us about your work. I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

You told us that your school is good and we agree. You work hard and behave extremely well. You are polite and friendly and get along together well. The school council is very active and has written some informative newsletters to let everyone know what they have achieved and what they talk about in meetings.

We looked at your work and know that you make good progress. This is because your teachers work hard to make learning interesting and provide many extra activities for you. We enjoyed hearing about the visits you have made and how many activities you take part in locally and in school. We have asked your headteacher to help you make even better progress by making sure that teachers responsible for each subject understand how much progress you make. You can help by carrying on with your self-assessment and knowing how much you are learning.

The adults in the school take excellent care of you make sure the school is safe and welcoming. You know your targets for learning and also those that are personal to you.

Thank you once again for being so friendly. We wish you good luck in the future.

Best wishes

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector