

# Field Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117160
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326539
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Aldridge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Wallis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Henley-Washford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Watford Field Road Watford Hertfordshire WD18 0AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 221877
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 223134

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: attainment on entry to the school, the quality of support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and improvements in governance. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Field Junior is a larger than average school close to the centre of Watford. Although most pupils are from White British backgrounds, a higher than average proportion are from minority ethnic groups. These pupils are mainly from Pakistani families although increasingly pupils come from a range of European countries. An increasing number of pupils are admitted other than at the usual times of the year. A higher than average percentage of pupils are learning to speak English or come from homes where English is not the language spoken. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the percentage eligible for free school meals. A few pupils are from traveller families. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who are in public care. The school's work has been recognised by a range of awards including Activemark, Artsmark Silver, Eco-school Silver and Geography Mark Bronze.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Field Junior School is a good school and this is how it sees itself. The great majority of parents are pleased with what the school provides for their children. One summed up the views expressed by several as, 'It is a school that has to cater for a variety of pupils with many different needs and I feel it does that well'.

The school's baseline assessments show that pupils enter the school with below average attainment. They make good progress and achieve well to reach average standards by Year 6. Staff have worked hard to accelerate the progress that pupils make and this has improved steadily since the last inspection. The 2008 results, although provisional at present, show that standards were average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and this is the position now. Standards in reading are higher than standards in writing, and the school has identified the need to raise writing standards. It has also worked, with some success, to improve pupils' mathematics skills and this work is ongoing. The school's tracking information shows that pupils in all year groups are set to achieve the challenging targets that the school has set for them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and so are those with additional learning needs. For instance, the school has worked successfully with parents whose children are learning English to enable them to help pupils with their homework. As a result, there are no significant differences in the progress made by pupils from different groups.

Pupils' good achievement is associated with good teaching and learning and good academic guidance and support. The school has a clear teaching and learning policy that is well implemented because senior staff check that this is happening when they observe lessons. As a result, there is consistent practice across the school. Teachers are well supported in developing their skills and show a willingness to innovate. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of different pupils, as teachers make good use of accurate assessment information. Good relationships between staff and pupils and good management skills mean that pupils are confident learners who progress at a good rate in lessons. Because staff make sure that pupils know what they are learning about and what constitutes success, pupils are involved effectively in the learning process. Effective encouragement of pupils to talk in pairs enables them to learn from one another during lessons and keeps them thinking and involved. Pupils enjoy extra challenges that teachers provide, such as those to make their 'brains tingle'. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support in lessons for those that need this. For instance, they prompt, rather than telling pupils the answers, and teachers are careful to ensure that they include pupils of all abilities in discussions. Since the last inspection, the school has developed an effective system of setting targets for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well aware of these. They also find teachers' marking helpful as it points out what they need to do to improve.

Pupils' personal development is good. They soon settle in when they arrive because they are well supported in making the move from the infants' school. Pastoral care is excellent so pupils feel safe and secure. The committed staff include a Welfare Officer who monitors and supports well those pupils who are experiencing personal difficulties. Pupils flourish in the school's racially harmonious atmosphere, quickly make friends and greatly enjoy coming to school. Most attend well, but a few poor attenders and family holidays taken during term-time combine to reduce the overall figure. The good curriculum is successful in encouraging pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities to build pupils' self-esteem as all achievements are recognised and celebrated. Pupils say they often feel proud of what

they have achieved at school. Cultural diversity is celebrated and pupils grow to understand and respect differences between people. A wide range of well-attended sports clubs, a generous allocation of time for physical education, and good teaching about healthy living encourages pupils to take plenty of exercise and eat healthily at school. They learn effectively how to keep themselves safe in a variety of settings. Behaviour is good; occasionally it is outstanding, such as in the achievement assembly when it is evident that pupils derive as much pleasure from the successes of their peers as they do from their own. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in school and contribute well to the local and wider communities by entering local competitions, entertaining the public with choral singing, raising funds for charities, recycling waste and contributing to the local newspaper. They have an influential voice through the school council. The curriculum is well enriched by visits, visitors themed weeks and residential school journeys. Although satisfactory at present, the school recognises that there is more to be done to broaden the range of opportunities for pupils who have particular gifts and talents, and this is reflected in their development plan. Because pupils develop well their basic skills, learn to work effectively individually and in groups, and acquire enterprise skills, they are well prepared for secondary school.

Leadership and management are good. Leadership roles are widely shared and staff work well together as a team. The school has constructive links with local services and schools; these widen the opportunities that the school can provide. Self-evaluation is good and has helped the school to improve well since the last inspection. It is accurate, involves all stakeholders and identifies the school's strengths and areas for improvement. At present, there are some vacancies on the governing body. Although governance has improved since the last inspection, and governors now conduct their business more efficiently through committees, governance remains satisfactory as governors are not in a position yet to contribute as well as they might to self-evaluation. Nonetheless, they are supportive, keep the school's work under review and ensure that statutory requirements are met. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue the work started to accelerate progress and raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Broaden the range of enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.
- Strengthen governance by recruiting so that the school has a full complement of governors.

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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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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**

1 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Field Junior School, Watford, WA18 0AZ

Thank you for making me welcome in your school, particularly to the school council who spoke to me about school life. I enjoyed my day with you, especially the achievement assembly.

I came to the school to see how well you are all getting on and to find out what the school could do to make it even better. I agree that yours is a good school. It was good to hear that you all enjoy coming to school so much, and also that you feel safe there. I could see how well you all get on together. Because the teaching is good you are all making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Improving your skills in these subjects helps to prepare you well for secondary school.

You are developing well as young people. You behave well and sometimes your behaviour is excellent. When you are at school you eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. I found out that you know well how to keep yourselves safe. The staff take excellent care of you. They also work well with your parents. I was impressed with the number of jobs that you do around the school. You also contribute to the wider community, by recycling, entering local competitions and contributing to the local newspaper.

The staff know what the school does well and what needs to be improved. The three most important things are to:

- continue with the work that they have started to improve standards in writing and mathematics
- provide more activities for pupils who are particularly good at certain subjects or who have special talents
- recruit more governors so that they have the number that they should have.

You can help the school to improve by attending as often as you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector