

Coates Way JMI and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117340
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326581
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	251
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 Tony Ellis
Headteacher	Mr Simon Marriot
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Coates Way Garston Watford Hertfordshire WD25 9NW

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
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Telephone number
Fax number

01923670341
01923670341

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend a part-time Nursery class. Most join the Reception class if there are the places available. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly typical. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, though a fifth comes from minority ethnic families. Several speak English as an additional language. The school has a Basic Skills Quality Mark and a Healthy Schools Award.

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 flourish. The school has developed some outstanding features and is on course to improve further. Pupils make good progress year-on-year and by Year 6, standards are well above average in reading, mathematics and science and are exceptionally high in writing. Pupils' good personal development supports their learning well. Pupils are eager to develop new skills and are keen to succeed. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are exceptionally polite and well mannered. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and support each other well. As one pupil pointed out, 'We all look out for each other here.' The older ones help in the Nursery and act as play leaders so that playtimes run smoothly.

Teaching is good and pupils are well motivated. Teachers set high standards and plan lessons carefully to make sure that all groups achieve well. Technology, such as laptop computers and interactive whiteboards, is used well to enhance learning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. In some lessons, teachers tend to dominate proceedings and, when this is the case, pupils do not experiment, investigate and follow their own lines of enquiry enough. There is some exemplary teaching but there are also occasions when teaching is less effective because the pace of learning is too slow. Leaders have correctly identified the need to iron out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the good range of activities provided. They report that special events such as World Day, Science, Art and Mathematics Days and World Book Days are 'quality'. There is also a good range of after school activities, including a popular 'animation club' where pupils make short films. Visits to places of interest, including residential visits for the older pupils, enrich learning. Pupils develop a good range of computer skills and are becoming adept at multimedia presentations. They are prepared well for the next phase of their education and for their future lives.

One key strength of the school is the way in which every individual pupil is nurtured. All groups receive equally good support and the school constantly demonstrates that every child matters. The school is thus a harmonious community. Good pastoral care helps to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. It also enables them gain a good understanding of how to stay safe and look after themselves. Pupils report that they would have no hesitation in sharing any worries with staff, knowing that adults will listen and sort things out. They receive good guidance about how to improve their work, especially through teachers' helpful marking of their books. They receive good advice about how to deal with possible dangers. They know about the need for a balanced diet and plenty of exercise. Child protection procedures are robust and understood well by staff.

Good leadership and management have helped the school to go from strength to strength. The headteacher gives clear direction and has encouraged all staff to work together to raise standards and improve provision. Teachers and support staff are united in their determination to provide pupils with a high quality of education. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and helps to identify key priorities for further development. As a result, many initiatives have been successful and others are being implemented. For instance, a thorough analysis of the school's performance revealed that pupils' writing was an area for improvement. A battery of strategies, including booster classes, celebration of success through weekly 'Star Writer Awards' and the setting of ambitious targets for the amount of progress pupils were expected to make, proved highly successful. Now the quality of pupils' writing is outstanding and is a key strength of the school.

This good track record of improvement shows that the school has good capacity to improve further. Governors give good support and make sure that the school fulfils legal requirements. Good links with other local schools and support groups help to knit the community together. The school has identified the need to create links with schools in other countries in order to give its pupils a deeper appreciation of other peoples' lives, customs and beliefs.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter with abilities expected for their age. They progress well in all areas of learning, particularly in speaking, personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception Year most children have attained standards that are slightly above expectations. Those who find learning difficult also make good progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Teaching is consistently good and activities are mainly well planned, although some provide insufficient challenge. Children enjoy playing with water, for example, but opportunities are sometimes missed to extend their learning by purposeful experimentation. There is a good balance between adult- and child-led tasks. The range of activities, which includes good opportunities for sharing and taking turns, strongly supports children's personal and social development. Children play well together, show high regard for each other's feelings and are courteous to adults. Children are beginning to take responsibility for small tasks, such as self-registration. They enjoy managing the class hairdressing salon and the Chinese restaurant.

Speaking and listening are actively encouraged and, in class, children are keen to explain what they have done and why. Health and welfare provision meets requirements and, as a result, children feel secure. There are lovely relationships between adults and children. Adults are calm and kind. The staff's gentle but firm approach helps children who have difficulty in separating from their parents settle quickly. Parents and grandparents play a key role by helping out on a daily basis.

The inside classroom is a stimulating and exciting environment. However, the outside facilities are not as well developed for learning. The school has identified this as an area for development in order to meet all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and provide more opportunities for pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry and learn through experimentation, investigation and exploration.
- Develop the outside area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it provides an easily accessible, all weather, learning resource.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well on many fronts. The strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics helps them to make good progress throughout the school. By Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The provisional results of the 2008 national tests for pupils in Year 6 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The progress that pupils make in writing from Year 2 to Year 6 is exceptionally good and standards in writing are very high. Much of the written work produced by pupils currently in Year 6 is stunning. Many say

that they love writing: 'I get these colourful pictures in my mind and just write down what I can see in my mind's eye.' Pupils also produce good work in art and design. Pupils are good at sports. Many achieve well in music and enjoy taking a full part in school performances.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are happy at school. They feel safe and say there is no bullying. Most are aware of the need to eat healthy options, and the equipment available at break times encourages active play. Skills and understanding developed through the curriculum ensure that pupils are well-prepared for adult life. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and attendance is above average. Pupils are courteous, and considerate of each other. When, for example, pupils forgot lines during a rehearsal, classmates waited sympathetically until they were prompted. They also work supportively in teams and enjoy each other's successes. Attitudes to learning are excellent and pupils are keen to achieve well. Time given to reflect on personal progress in lessons enables pupils to develop self-confidence in their learning because they identify what they have achieved and where they need additional help. The student council plays a central role in suggesting improvements for the school, such as a multicultural lunch each week. The cultural and religious diversity of the pupils is celebrated, with good levels of parental participation. There is a clear moral code and pupils know what is right and wrong.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are particularly good at encouraging pupils to express their views and share their opinions. In the best lessons they seize opportunities to explore words and extend pupils' vocabularies. Pupils develop an exceptionally good understanding of how to write powerful passages by using strong adjectives and interesting adverbs. In Year 6, they understand how to add impact to their writing by constructing compound sentences with carefully crafted subordinate clauses. They have learnt how to speed up the action by using a series of short, sharp sentences that add suspense to, for instance, their arresting horror stories. Increasingly drama is used well to bring learning alive. Pupils wrote powerful reports from the front line during the D-Day landings and videoed good news reports that included interviews with Winston Churchill. However, teaching is sometimes too heavily reliant on instructional methods and this restricts opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. Pupils who find learning difficult are provided for very effectively and so they achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has made a good start on linking subjects together to provide a thematic approach that matches pupils' interests well. It is particularly evident in the varied activities for World Day. Although pupils have access to information and communication technology they do not, in some classes, use the internet enough to find things out for themselves. Provision for safety, health and well-being is robust. Pupils in Year 6 take on the responsibility of supporting Nursery children first thing in the morning. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra activities, including football, netball, guitar, and drama, and attendance at these is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support across all years supports learning well. Parents are very positive about the school, praising the 'calm and gentle approach' and commenting on the pleasing progress, both academically and socially, made by their children. Good relationships between staff and pupils provide a positive learning environment in which each individual is valued, and supported in achieving their targets. The school monitors the impact of its strategies closely to ensure that pupils are given equal opportunities, so that all make good progress. Positive links with the local community, which include providing a weekly lunch for local senior citizens, enable pupils to develop a greater awareness of where they live. The school successfully promotes a harmonious ethos in which all religions and cultures are celebrated. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is passionate about providing the best possible education for all pupils. Under his good leadership, the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards have risen and staff share a commitment to further improve the quality of learning. To aid this improvement, leaders set ambitious targets for the amount of progress that pupils are expected to make. A strong sense of teamwork has been established and teaching staff are developing their leadership skills well. However, some are new to their particular areas of responsibility and have yet to have a major impact on raising standards. Staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils' progress is measured carefully to pinpoint any underachievement and to see where extra support is needed. Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'My children are happy and the school environment has been nurturing and life-enhancing.'

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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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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?	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	1
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**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coates Way JMI and Nursery School, Watford, WD25 9NW

What a good school you go to! We thoroughly enjoyed our short stay with you. You made us feel welcome and you were very friendly and helpful.

You make good progress in reading, mathematics and science. You reach particularly high standards in writing and some of the pieces written by Year 6 are brilliant. You all get on well with each other and value the friendships you make. We thought that your behaviour was excellent. You are polite to adults and to each other. You really enjoy school and get on well with your teachers. They are all keen to help you and to make sure that each and every one of you is successful. You are thoughtful and sensible. The school council does a good job and we were pleased to hear that the council helped to make decisions about homework. You get good guidance about leading healthy lifestyles and you get plenty of exercise. You find out a great deal about other countries and you all enjoyed your World Day activities, especially eating the different national foods. You are good at sport and many of you enjoy singing and playing musical instruments. You learn a good range of computer skills and know how to use the internet safely.

We think that there are two things that would make your learning even better.

- Because you are so sensible, you should be given more opportunities to explore, investigate, experiment and find things out for yourselves.
- The outside area for children in the Nursery and Reception classes should be extended to make a more exciting outdoor area that could be used in all weather.

We know that you are all keen to do well and we are sure that if you continue to work hard your school will go from strength to strength. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Messer

Lead inspector