

Earlswood Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124987
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328256
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	346
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 Morag Topham
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Winterton
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St John's Road Redhill RH1 6DZ
Telephone number	01737 765125

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Inspection number	328256

Fax number

01737 763306

Age group 3-7

Inspection date 4 March 2009

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated:

- the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well learners are helped to make progress
- the impact of school leaders' monitoring.

The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed; parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined; and school information, including its self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Around three quarters of the pupils are White British, with others coming from several different ethnic backgrounds. The largest minority groups are of Asian and Asian British heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is broadly average. Relatively few pupils have learning difficulties, but those that do mostly receive help for their speech, language and communication needs. Earlswood runs a Children's Centre as well as before- and after-school clubs. It is part of a loose confederation with other local schools. A survey report was carried out by Ofsted in December 2007 on the deployment, training and development of staff not employed as teachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Earlswood is an outstanding school. This is a view that is very strongly endorsed by exceptionally appreciative parents. Many wrote to say, 'We are delighted with the schooling our child receives.' Parents greatly value that 'There is a real community spirit here.' This is certainly a school where every child is made to feel valued and is encouraged to do well. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding because it is consistently good or better throughout the school. Again, parents' comments sum this up, describing how 'The staff are very approachable and put a lot of time and effort into their very innovative planning and teaching.'

Innovation is at the heart of this school. The headteacher, school leaders, governors and staff all share a vision, communicated clearly to parents and, increasingly, to the children themselves, of a school where pupils do not just do well in the basics, but are also helped to develop into enthusiastic, independent learners. Teachers and teaching assistants work in close partnership, which enables pupils to work and learn in small groups. This is a feature of learning throughout the school, from the Nursery through to Year 2. Teachers' expectations are very high, so pupils of all abilities, including the most able, are stretched to think for themselves. School leaders monitor very closely the learning that goes on and keep a very careful track of each pupil's progress. Extra support is put in place for those pupils who need it. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English, make excellent progress. Pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and their achievement is outstanding because they also do very well in other areas, including in their creative and problem-solving skills. As a parent put it, 'As well as an excellent education, the school provides creativity, flair and zest for life.' These skills give pupils excellent preparation for the next stage of their education. Pupils do not leave their thirst for learning at the school gate. Another parent commented about their daughter, 'With the guidance and excellent communication of the Earlswood team, she is improving rapidly - at home, as well as at school.'

What stands out most in this school is the stimulating curriculum that motivates pupils to learn through play. Throughout the day, active bursts of teacher-led activities are followed by structured opportunities for pupils to choose their own activities, so that they learn by discovering things for themselves. Activities are made interesting and relevant, captivating the enthusiasm and excitement of both boys and girls. In Year 1, for example, pupils engaged in scientific investigations don white lab coats to show that they are working as scientists. In the same year group, pupils are enjoying the work they are doing linked to the theme of superheroes. Adults join in. This means that in one class, pupils had eagerly undertaken a science investigation on water-resistant fabrics to help solve a problem for 'Superwoman', who had complained that her colourful costume had not kept dry. In Year 2, creative links between subjects involve pupils in practising their literacy while learning history, with much emphasis placed on pupils researching information for themselves. Rather than just one history topic, this means that pupils in the same classes are busy searching glossaries and the internet for information on a host of different historical topics, including the Romans, the Victorians, the Second World War and the Great Fire of London.

'Earlswood allows children to be children and to learn through play and understanding. It is wonderful to watch my children grow, develop and be involved.' This comment from a parent sums up well the picture of pupils' outstanding personal development. Many parents praise the growing confidence that their children develop. Relationships are excellent. Pupils from

different backgrounds mix, play and work very well together, making the school a happy and harmonious community. Pupils value the opportunities given to them to learn about their own and each other's cultures and beliefs. The school works hard to help broaden pupils' horizons, for example through partnering with a school in Uganda. Closer to home, partnerships with other local schools help staff to learn from each other's experience and have contributed to the high standard of teaching. Support for parents and the wider community, including courses run through the Children's Centre, also make a very strong contribution to promoting community cohesion.

Excellent arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel very safe. They report that they are very confident that there is always an adult they can go to if they have any worries or concerns. The recent focus on strengthening the use of success criteria for pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and learning skills has given the pupils a very clear understanding of how they can move their learning on. There are comprehensive arrangements to chase up immediately any unexplained absences. Nevertheless, the persistent absence of a small number of pupils depresses the school's overall attendance rate. It is in line with that of other primary schools. Staff set work for those pupils who are not at school, for example because they have been taken on extended visits overseas, but some parents could do more to ensure that their children do not miss out on valuable schooling.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, and many take part in the wide range of clubs on offer, in addition to the breakfast and after-school clubs that extend the school day. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they are given to take responsibility, for example as school councillors and as eco-warriors, 'being friendly to the environment'.

School leaders have a crystal clear picture of how well the school is doing, and their zeal and monitoring have secured a rise in standards, and a consistently high quality of provision for the pupils. Parents have noticed this too. One explained, 'I feel the school has got better each year.' School leaders' feedback to teachers has helped them to accelerate pupils' learning - for example, by identifying, in last term's monitoring, the scope for teachers to give more emphasis to explaining success criteria to pupils. The rigour of school self-evaluation and the sustained improvement since the last inspection show the school's outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

'This is a very good school, and my daughter really enjoys attending. Her reading and writing skills have improved significantly since she joined in September.' This comment from one parent reflects those of many. Children start school with skills that are below those expected for their ages, but they get off to a great start in both the Nursery and Reception years. Children are helped to quickly settle because they are visited in their homes and they make visits to the Early Years classes prior to starting school. By the time they leave the Reception Year, children have learnt the skills that they need in order to continue to make outstanding progress, not only in the basic areas of language and mathematics but also in their physical, social and creative development. Through consistently good and better teaching, children are given activities that provide them with an exceptionally stimulating range of learning opportunities. As a result, children become confident, independent learners. Learning is well organised and productive because the staff clearly understand the needs of each individual child. They use their observations and assessments to plan work that motivates and challenges the children at just

the right level. The excellent leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that there is a continuous appraisal of what works best for each child and a thorough analysis of their progress. This helps guide very well-tailored support. By the time the children join Year 1, almost all are working at levels that are at least in line with those expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils do not miss school unnecessarily, by doing more to discourage parents from taking their children off on holidays in term time.

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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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
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

16 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Earlswood Infant and Nursery School, Redhill, RH1 6DZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit. You are proud of your school, and you have every right to be because Earlswood is an outstanding school. It is exceedingly well run, and you do exceptionally well from the start of the Nursery Year to the end of Year 2 because of the way your teachers help you all to think and make choices for yourselves. You especially enjoy all the exciting things you get to learn. I was impressed, for example, by the way those of you in Year 1 were solving problems, such as helping 'Superwoman' to find a more waterproof material for her costume.

Some of you told us about how the success criteria that you have on the wall in your classes are helping you to improve your work, including in reading, writing and mathematics. If you make sure that you know the success criteria and do your very best to achieve them, you can help yourselves to make even faster progress.

It was very good to see how very well behaved you are and how very well you get on with each other. This is one of the reasons that Earlswood is such a happy, friendly place to be. You feel safe at school because staff take exceptionally good care of you. The one thing that disappointed us was that some of you miss quite a lot of school because your parents take you out of school during term time. We have asked the school to work with your parents to avoid this as much as possible.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector