

Underhill Infant School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101301
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	335690
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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

The registered childcare provision, 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 of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynn Cornelius
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Moore
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2007
School address	Mays Lane Barnet Herts EN5 2LZ
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Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence. In addition 45 parental questionnaires and 17 staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- the achievement of pupils in English, particularly writing
- the effectiveness of teaching in ensuring that it challenges all learners
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in contributing to the school's improvement.

Information about the school

Underhill Infants' is a two-form entry, extended school with a nursery class. Attached to the school is a Children's Centre catering for children from the age of 18 months to 3 years. There are currently 192 pupils on roll in the infant school and 31 in the Children's Centre.

The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is approximately twice the national average. Over half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with over a third speaking English as an additional language. There are currently 28 different languages spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly linked to difficulties in communication, emotional or social needs, is above the national average. The proportion with a statement of educational need is close to average.

The school has achieved Healthy School status, Active Mark, Artsmark and a Bronze International Schools award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Underhill Infant School is a caring and supportive school where pupils feel safe and achieve well. Parents speak highly of the positive ethos that the headteacher and staff have created at the school. They feel they are always welcome at the school and greatly value the efforts that staff make in order to ensure their children achieve and enjoy school. As one parent wrote, 'We are extremely happy with the school. We love the fact that each child is dealt with as an individual. The teachers are friendly and very approachable.' Since the previous inspection, the school's leadership team has worked tirelessly to ensure the planning, building and integrating of the Children's Centre with the school did not affect the quality of education provided for the pupils; in this they have succeeded.

Children start in the Nursery with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those usually expected for their age. This is particularly the case in children's communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress, so that by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills have developed well, although their language and literacy skills continue to be weak as they join Year 1. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that by the time they leave school, their attainment is in line with national averages. Teachers work hard to make learning fun and relevant to pupils' interests and needs. They have ensured the curriculum is creative and stimulating, but there is not sufficient guidance within curriculum plans to help teachers plan lessons that are always precisely matched to the needs of all pupils. Consequently, strategies to support some of the higher attaining pupils are not used consistently well, particularly in writing, which means these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The school is well led and managed. This ensures that staff and pupils feel valued and supported. Teamwork is strong and leadership is shared throughout the school. The school has good systems to collect information about individual pupils' performance. This gives an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and enables teachers to identify pupils who may be underachieving and provide them with additional support. However, this information is not always analysed with sufficient rigour to give school leaders information about the performance of different groups of pupils or developing trends.

The school has identified key priorities for action in its improvement plan, informed by good systems to check on its work. There is a shared vision and willingness to work hard to make further improvements. However, while the main improvement actions are identified accurately, it is not always clear how the impact of the actions will be measured, particularly in terms of pupil outcomes. The school has made good progress since the time of its last inspection and continues to demonstrate that it has good

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capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of assessment information to:
- ensure teachers use a wider variety of teaching approaches and activities that challenge and motivate all learners, particularly the most able
- give leaders information about trends in attainment and progress.
- Enhance the monitoring and evaluation of the school by revising the school improvement plan so that the success criteria are related to pupils' outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

There is a good learning atmosphere in all classes. Pupils enjoy discussions, respond to questions confidently and work with enthusiasm alone or in small groups. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers ensure exciting, practical and interesting activities in lessons, to which pupils respond well. There is a strong emphasis on drama and role play in lessons, which further develops their speaking and listening skills.

The work of the Children's Centre has had a very positive impact on outcomes for pupils. The school works closely with the centre to identify any emerging speech or communication difficulties so that support can be provided and referrals to a specialist service made promptly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well as a result of carefully planned and effectively implemented individual programmes.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly and play happily together. They say they enjoy their school and are proud of it. They have a strong understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to stay safe; this means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

A few families do not send their children to school often enough, therefore attendance is no better than satisfactory, despite encouragement by the school and action by outside agencies.

Pupils make a positive contribution through raising money for a number of charities and they demonstrate a responsible attitude through the roles they have in school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use open-ended questions well to allow pupils opportunities to develop their understanding. Most lessons provide a variety of tasks so pupils remain attentive and involved in their work. However, at times the higher ability pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because teachers give them work that is insufficiently challenging. The majority of teaching is good; where teaching is only satisfactory, it is because teachers do not always adapt tasks if pupils do not respond as expected.

Teachers are increasingly effective in using assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. This helps to identify speedily those at risk of falling behind and to deploy effective support. Learning support assistants are well trained and work in strong partnership with teachers. For example, they are fully involved in half-termly review meetings. Consequently, their awareness of pupils' levels of achievement and particular needs is acute, resulting in good support for pupils who need additional help with their learning or are at the early stages of speaking English.

The curriculum is balanced and flexible in responding to pupils' needs. Pupils learn well because they are presented with a range of different experiences. Information and communication technology helps to make learning stimulating. A range of visitors and visits enriches pupils' understanding of the wider world and helps bring learning to life for the pupils. New strategies, such as 'Big Writing', are being introduced, and are helping pupils develop a more creative approach in their written work, although it is too early to judge the impact of this.

Care, guidance and support are the core of the school's work and the welfare and safety

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of pupils is demonstrated in the considerate way that staff talk to and about the pupils in their care.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher in the transition from an infant school to Underhill Infant School and Children's Centre has been commendable, resulting in a strong and shared identity for all. Staff are knowledgeable, well deployed and work effectively as a team to provide continuity in learning and care. The new accommodation is bright and welcoming and used effectively. The school is welcoming to all and respectful of different backgrounds. The majority of pupils are making good progress and are fully included in the life of the school.

The senior and middle managers provide strong leadership. Teachers with responsibility for particular subjects and aspects of the school's work are encouraged to put forward their own ideas and contribute to leadership and management. The governors demonstrate a clear commitment to raising standards and a willingness to take part in training which will further enhance their role. They influence the work of the school in a strategic way.

There is a strong cohesive community within the school. However, senior leaders acknowledge the promotion of cohesion within the wider community is at an early stage. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory.

Procedures to ensure the safety of pupils meet government guidelines. There are, for example, effective procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school at the time of the inspection.

The school's self-evaluation shows that it holds a realistic view of its performance and is clear about how to improve things at a suitable pace.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress because activities in the classrooms and in the outdoor areas are stimulating. A good balance of teacher-led and children's chosen activities provide valuable opportunities to develop independent learning skills. Opportunities for extending learning, such as developing children's speaking and vocabulary skills, are planned well, particularly for those children who are learning English as an additional language. Staff consistently encourage children's literacy skills by modeling language so that they learn how to speak in correct English. Topics are planned in detail, and the individual needs of children are considered very carefully.

Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Valuable links with parents help children to settle quickly, become familiar with the routines and develop confidence. Children are well prepared for the transition to the next phase of their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires are positive about the work of the school. A very few parents raised concerns about the quality of

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pupils' learning and their progress, although the findings of the inspection team did not match their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Underhill Infants' and Children Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 192 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	62	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	56	18	40	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	40	17	38	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	38	16	36	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	40	20	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	31	21	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	47	19	42	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	27	20	44	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	31	20	44	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	33	22	49	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	22	24	53	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	47	14	31	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	51	17	38	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Underhill Infant School and Children's Centre, Barnet EN5 2LZ

Thank you very much for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We really enjoyed our visit, particularly the chance to have lunch with you and talk to so many of you during the two days. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out about your school.

These are the things we liked about your school.

- We think you are getting on well in your learning. You particularly enjoy the range of clubs and other activities on offer.
- You feel safe at school and know that if you have a problem there is always an adult to talk to. You make healthy choices, behave well and make visitors to your school feel very welcome.
- The headteacher, governors and other staff work effectively together to make your school successful. They are working hard to make it an even better place to learn.

We have asked your school to work on a few things to improve things even more. We have asked them to:

- make sure that teachers have the right kind of information to help them plan even more challenging lessons
- make sure that the senior staff know how well the school is doing and that they plan carefully to make things even better
- ensure that the school's plan for improvement is easier to check so that everyone knows if the school is doing as well as it could be.

We hope you keep on trying hard and enjoying all of the interesting activities which help you learn and play.

Yours faithfully

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector

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