

Howard Infant and Nursery School, King's Lynn

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120894 |
| Local Authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 339806 |
| Inspection dates | 1–2 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Judi Bedawi |

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

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 161 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Marguerite Wright |
| Headteacher | Ms Ann De-Ath |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 November 2006 |
| School address | Parkway Gaywood King's Lynn |
| Telephone number | 01553 774587 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed seven teachers in 16 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with pupils, governors, staff, the educational welfare officer and the school improvement partner. A meeting was held with two parents who asked to speak with the inspectors. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment and attendance. The inspectors received and analysed 43 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact on attendance of the persistent absence of a very few pupils
- the work done to raise standards by supporting pupils individually and in small groups
- the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those at the early stages of learning English.

Information about the school

This is smaller than most other similar schools. Pupils mainly come from the local semi-urban area and are mostly from White British backgrounds. There is an above-average proportion of minority ethnic pupils with growing numbers having little or no understanding of English on arrival. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs, including those for speech and language, behaviour and moderate learning difficulties. The Nursery class was flooded recently. At the time of the inspection nursery children were being taught in a much smaller room. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2009. The school has Healthy Schools status and has recently gained the Eco-Schools Bronze 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

This is a good school. Pupils are enabled to grow as learners and to do their best within an extremely caring environment that is steadfastly focused on raising personal and academic aspirations from the very start. Parents are extremely positive about the school, typically saying, 'We see very good progress in our child's mathematics, reading, writing and other activities,' and 'I have noticed a marked improvement in my child's education since moving to Howard.'

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is low and they have very limited social and communication skills. Nonetheless, they make good progress in all areas of learning. This continues through the Reception Year with most at or close to expected levels as they move into Year 1. Pupils' progress is good across the school and has been accelerating, particularly in the last academic year. This is due to highly effective intervention, support work and consistently good teaching. School data show that an increasing number of pupils are making outstanding progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who have little or no English when they arrive, do exceptionally well from their low starting points due to early identification of needs and prompt provision of small group and one-to-one support from staff trained to meet pupils' diverse and specific needs. Higher attaining pupils performed particularly well this year in all subjects, and notably in mathematics and writing, although pupils do not always write enough interesting work independently. Good use of assessment, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is contributing to an increase in standards, although marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work. The school has, rightly, identified that the assessment of pupils' scientific progress is at an early stage of development and that the large school grounds are not used as well as they could be to enrich learning about sustainability and environmental science.

Pupils work hard, enjoy and value learning and school, and celebrate their own and others' successes. They listen well, and enjoy asking and answering questions. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel very safe because staff look after their welfare exceptionally well. Pupils understand the need to live healthily and readily take part in sport: they particularly enjoy football. They participate well within their school community, helping to make decisions through the school council and are regularly involved in activities in the local area. There are too few opportunities to learn about the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom or about life in other parts of the world.

The headteacher has an impressive understanding of pupils and their families, and works closely with her skilled senior leaders and staff team. Their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and strong drive to raise standards are rapidly accelerating pupils' progress

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and increasing their basic skills. The governing body has a good overview of the school's strengths and the need to further raise standards. Self-evaluation of school performance by senior leaders is accurate. Capacity to improve, taking into account the improving standards, is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen existing work to raise standards by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend the amount and content of their independent writing
 - developing the assessment of pupils' progress in science and using the outdoor areas more in environmental science work
 - marking pupils' work consistently and informatively so that pupils know how to improve their work independently.
- Find exciting ways for pupils to learn about other lifestyles and cultures in the United Kingdom and to know more about international links, customs and communities around the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

One pupil said, 'Learning is sometimes tricky but fun'. This is the view echoed by almost all pupils, who are keen to acquire new skills and facts. They work well with good concentration and interest, increasingly able to work confidently. Pupils' personal development, as they realise they are becoming successful learners, is good and motivates them even further. This, combined with newly introduced homework, leads to broadly attainment and consistently good progress, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding in writing, mathematics, reading and some other subjects, including music. Excellent progress in music was observed in an exhilarating lesson where pupils warmed up their voices then sang with gusto, clapped out and performed contrasting sentence rhythms with instruments and knew the meaning of words such as rhythm, pitch and beat. Certain groups of children, including those learning English, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and high-attaining pupils are identified early. Aptly focused support in small groups leads to accelerated progress for each group.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent; even the youngest quickly follow instructions in lessons or at play. Bullying is exceptionally rare with no recorded incidents of racism. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school and staff are always quick to listen or help. Pupils learn how to cross the busy local roads safely. They take on and relish school council responsibility; for example, recycling items and fundraising. They contribute well to the school and the local area, but have less understanding of the wider United Kingdom and global communities. The school has Healthy Schools status and promotes healthy lifestyles well. Most recently it has gained the Eco-Schools Bronze award for its work in sustainability and horticulture. Attendance, for the vast majority, is good and continues to improve.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Staff work well together to develop pupils' skills and interests, with good questioning and explanations that challenge pupils' thinking and encourage their enjoyment. The consistently good teaching, with a proportion that is outstanding, is successfully focused on supporting individuals and meeting their wide-ranging learning needs in class work, small groups and in one-to-one sessions. Support staff are very well trained and fully involved in lesson planning and ongoing assessment. This frequently helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at early stages in learning English to make impressive progress. Marking is inconsistent, ranging from some unchecked work to some where pupils are given clear pointers about how to improve their work. Pupils generally know their strengths and targets but not always how best to improve, one saying, for example, 'My writing is getting better but I think I need to read more.' The evolving curriculum is flexible, incorporating specific themes that reflect pupils' interests and promote learning. It is carefully adapted and resourced for pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities and those learning to speak English, with particularly good use of information and communication technology to aid

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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basic learning skills in different subjects. Pupils have a very good understanding of sustainability and eco-schools work, growing and selling fruit and vegetables and choosing plants to encourage butterflies and bees. Visits and visitors are a regular feature, contributing to topic work, through, for example, local history. There is a satisfactory range of after-school activities, including dance and football.

Pastoral care is outstanding because all staff willingly take extra steps to ensure pupils' well-being, emotionally and academically, so that barriers to learning are significantly reduced or removed. Pupils are empowered to learn. Families and pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are exceptionally well supported not only by the school but also through access to and support from the most relevant external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, or through the school running parenting skills groups. Excellent monitoring of welfare-related aspects such as attendance has brought about ongoing improvement in reducing persistent absence, following attendance panel meetings and legal action. Transition arrangements with the pre-school and at the end of Year 2 are strong. Parents value the care and support available, typically saying, 'My daughter goes to school, happy and smiling and she comes out the same. She loves it here.'

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 | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The caring, skilled leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders enables pupils to thrive and provides their families with a very positive experience of education. All staff contribute well to the school's increasing effectiveness. There is good uptake of training to develop their skills in order to further raise school standards. Members of the governing body are experienced. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to challenge senior leaders where necessary. Safeguarding is good, exceeding government requirements with noteworthy practice in the way governors monitor safeguarding provision for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Governors also take a key role in monitoring attendance and liaising with external agencies and parents to reduce persistent absence and risk to pupils. Parental partnerships are good and the 'open door' access to the headteacher is greatly appreciated. Other partnerships are outstanding not only in the width of access to learning, welfare and family support but in the links that help pupils to overcome often considerable hurdles so that they are free to learn. Community cohesion is satisfactory:

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it is promoted strongly in the school and local area but United Kingdom and global links are limited. Equality of opportunity is good, and all pupils are enabled to make good and occasionally outstanding progress with their backgrounds and cultures equally valued and respected. Resources are well managed with a small under-spend reserved to refurbish the recently flooded Nursery accommodation.

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 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

From their low attainment on entry, children make good progress in all areas of learning. A few, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those with little or no understanding of English, make outstanding progress. This is due to extra support with their emotional and social skills and individual programmes including one-to-one work to accelerate skills in speaking and in mathematical development. In the Nursery, progress in these areas is particularly strong, as many children start school with very limited skills. A few have very challenging behaviour that is managed extremely well, with clear boundaries and high but realistic expectations, and opportunities to make 'good choices'. With additional one-to-one support, they learn to control their behaviour even faster. When children were given free choice in the Nursery, they played together very well, undertaking a long 'car journey' with 'passengers' often saying 'Are we there yet?' The front-seat passenger used a real map to give directions to the driver, saying, 'Turn left, now go straight', so that they arrived at journey's end without getting lost. By the end of the Nursery year, children have developed some important learning skills. As a result, Reception staff are able to focus

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closely on developing children's basic literacy, numeracy and other skills. Although time is effectively spent on developing children's speaking and listening, good speech is sometimes insufficiently reinforced because children's responses are not consistently used to practise clear speaking in full sentences. In small group work on focused activities, children make good progress. This was observed in mathematical learning where children created a block graph on farm animals following a farm visit.

Staff plan a good range of well-balanced, carefully monitored and evaluated child-initiated and adult-directed activities, continually assessing learning through observations. Record-keeping is satisfactory and is being reviewed to better show the progress made. Good use is made of outdoor areas and the extended school grounds. The good leadership, management and teamwork between the staff have a positive impact on children's development.

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

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, all agree that their children are kept safe and that the school is led and managed well. The overwhelming majority are pleased with their children's education and enjoyment of school, their progress and the information that parents receive. They appreciate the support to help learning at home, so that their children's needs are met. They believe teaching to be good and think the school helps to promote healthy lifestyles. A very large majority agree that pupils' behaviour and transition when pupils move to the next class or school are good and that the school listens to their suggestions. A very few parents and carers have reservations about some aspects of school life, including pupils' behaviour and transition. The inspection team found no evidence to support these views and found pupils' behaviour to be outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howard Infant and Nursery School, King's Lynn 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 26 | 60 | 16 | 37 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 29 | 67 | 14 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 21 | 49 | 21 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 26 | 60 | 16 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 27 | 63 | 15 | 35 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 20 | 47 | 22 | 51 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 49 | 21 | 49 | 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) | 17 | 40 | 20 | 47 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 20 | 47 | 22 | 51 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 18 | 42 | 20 | 47 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 18 | 42 | 23 | 53 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 23 | 53 | 20 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 27 | 63 | 15 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



5 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Howard Infant and Nursery School, King's Lynn, PE30 4QJ

We all want to thank you for giving us such a warm and friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. You go to a good school and you told us a lot about why you like it so much. You enjoy most things, including writing, using computers, solving mathematical problems, music, football, growing many different fruits and vegetables and getting 'flutterby' certificates for learning about butterflies. You feel very safe, have good friends and respect your teachers. You always work hard.

You make good progress because your teachers and teaching assistants do a good job in helping you. They make learning interesting and fun so you really enjoy school. Your behaviour is excellent, well done! Your attendance is good but a few of you do not come to school often enough - you can help by reminding your parents to take you to school every day. Your attainment is similar to that of pupils in most other nursery and infant schools and you make good progress. We are pleased that you are doing so well.

Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. I have asked them to:

- help you do longer pieces of writing on your own that are interesting to read
- make sure that marking in your books tells you how to improve your work
- let you do more science work outdoors and let you know how well it is going
- find exciting ways to learn about culture and lifestyles in other places in the United Kingdom and about communities around the world.

I am sure that you will enjoy writing about many things and telling your teachers what you know about the United Kingdom and other countries far away. I hope you continue to enjoy learning in the rest of your time at the school.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

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