

Healdswood Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122488
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340158
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Brooker HMI

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	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Marriott
Headteacher	Janet Newton
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, nominated staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's most recent performance data and assessments, the pupils' recent work and the school's development plans, the nine parental questionnaire responses in addition to 11 questionnaires returned by staff and 66 from pupils.

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

- the progress and attainment of specific groups of pupils
- how effectively the school meet the needs of individual pupils in lessons, through the planned curriculum and with targeted support and guidance
- how successfully the school has implemented the key areas for improvement since the last inspection
- the rigour and effectiveness of school self-evaluation in driving improvement.

Information about the school

Healdswood Infant and Nursery School draws its pupils from an area that experiences significant socio-economic disadvantage. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number on roll has fluctuated since the last inspection reflecting, in part, high levels of social instability. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national figures.

The school's on-site childcare provision has been extended since the last inspection. The Pre-School Learning Alliance, managed privately, provides wrap-around care for children in a purpose-built extension to the school building, and works closely with the school to supplement funded nursery provision.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a welcoming, safe and supportive environment in which children develop social skills and a self-confidence that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is well adapted to the needs of the pupils, and the school provides very good care, guidance and support. When children start in the Nursery, many have skills that are well below those expected for their age, but when they leave the school at the end of Year 2, the gap has closed quite significantly, notably in their social development. Pupils are generally polite and sensible and take care of one another. Some pupils produce work that is of a high standard: a few older pupils in Year 2 write confidently and fluently and some younger children are able to articulate their ideas really well. Standards are rising, but attainment remains too low, particularly in writing and reading, and pockets of underachievement persist, notably amongst boys.

The school knows that standards need to rise further and has focused much energy since the last inspection on enhancing its curriculum and amenities to ensure that it meets the needs of all children, as well as the broader needs of parents in the local community. A number of initiatives have been introduced to support specific interventions, and successful partnerships have been forged with parents and outside agencies that promote the pupils' well-being and development. Although the school works tirelessly to improve punctuality and attendance, rates of absence are higher than average and, for many pupils, this remain a barrier to good achievement.

Sound teaching ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress, but some lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge to secure more rapid gains. Although teachers know their pupils well, they do not routinely use individual targets to set suitable challenge or guide improvement. Lesson planning is not always precise enough in defining what different groups of pupils should achieve, and marking has insufficient impact because pupils do not routinely respond to the guidance given. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Nursery and in the Reception class helps the children to make a sound start to their learning and development.

Improvements since the last inspection demonstrate that there is capacity for sustained improvement. The school knows its strengths, and its improvement plans identify suitable priorities for development. However, strategic planning is not incisive because self-evaluation lacks rigour. Improvements in teaching have not been driven vigorously and, although staff work very hard, priorities lack clarity or clear criteria against which to gauge success.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in literacy by
 - giving pupils more structured speaking and listening opportunities in lessons
 - developing pupils' reading skills and fostering their love of literature
 - focusing sharply on improving the quality of pupils' writing by ensuring that they respond to the guidance provided in marking.
- Improve the quality of teaching by
 - defining more carefully the intended outcomes for different groups so that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged in lessons
 - ensuring that lessons maintain a brisk pace, with sufficient time for pupils to work independently and for high quality lesson plenaries
 - embedding the use of assessment and individual targets in the lessons.
- Strengthen the impact of school self-evaluation by
 - focusing sharply on the quality of pupils' learning and progress when evaluating lessons in order to improve teaching
 - undertaking more rigorous and critical analysis of assessment and attendance data, to increase outcomes for different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that planned actions are refined in the light of routine monitoring and evaluation.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

End of Key Stage 1 assessments indicate that standards have risen since the last inspection, but that attainment still remains low compared with national figures. This is particularly so for reading and writing. Although some older pupils read and write fluently, for many pupils their weaknesses in basic literacy are an impediment to higher attainment across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning and make secure progress in lessons. When teaching is lively and engaging the pupils make accelerated progress, but it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils are able to close the gap in standards. Evidence from lesson observations shows no significant differences between the progress of different groups; pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to their peers.

The pupils' considerate attitudes are shown by their kind and thoughtful behaviour around the school and in the playground. In lessons, they follow instructions and are keen to do well. Many children sustain their concentration, but this is not always the case, and teachers sometimes have to work hard to ensure that pupils stay focused. Older pupils are aware of their responsibilities and are keen to make a positive

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contribution, for example through the school council and with charity events. Pupils feel very safe are confident that adults will help them if they are ever upset or worried. They are enthusiastic about doing physical activities and enjoy the healthy food on offer at school. Pupils know how to stay safe and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, but they have very limited understanding of the wider world, particularly of the diversity and cultures in their immediate and surrounding communities. By the end of Year 2, many pupils have developed the essential skills to ensure that they can cope with the transition to junior school. However, for too many pupils their weak basic skills and high rates of absence remain a barrier to their future academic achievement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is well adapted to meet the pupils' different needs and is enhanced by a good range of out-of-school activities that the pupils enjoy. Teaching is well organised and makes effective use of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning, particularly in Year 2 where pupils routinely use laptop computers to draft and edit their work. Teachers have a range of strategies to ensure that pupils are

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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engaged in their learning: pupils do regular exercises to keep them alert; learning activities are varied frequently; and teaching assistants are used well in lessons. The outdoor classroom is also used imaginatively to develop pupils' wider skills and their enjoyment, so that even on wet and windy days the pupils can learn about growing vegetables and caring for their environment at first hand.

Although the picture is an improving one, teaching does not consistently produce high quality learning because lessons do not always match work precisely to meet the needs of different groups, and lesson plenaries then do not effectively consolidate what different pupils have learned. Pupils often make most rapid progress when working independently in supported groups, but quite often pupils either spend too long listening on the carpet or there are too many lesson transitions so they have too little time to complete their objectives. Marking is thorough, but pupils do not respond to the guidance given either because they do not understand it or because they are not routinely reminded about the advice and their specific targets for improvement.

The quality of care, guidance and support is a major strength, and there are many striking examples of the way that the school has helped individuals to overcome significant barriers to their education. Close attention is given to all aspects of care and support and the school works assiduously with families and children, including the most vulnerable individuals, to promote their well-being. Work on reducing high levels of absence, persistent absenteeism and poor punctuality has led to significant improvement since the last inspection. Occasional incidents of disruptive or challenging behaviour are very well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 school's day-to-day management is highly successful in creating a positive, safe and welcoming atmosphere and a stimulating environment for learning. Children's well-being is of paramount importance. The school meets all safeguarding regulations and duties, and its well-developed risk assessment ensures that children's safety is a constant priority. It works very hard to care for its pupils and to ensure that those who are potentially vulnerable or in danger of discrimination are properly supported. The school is proactive in working closely with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. Engaging parents is a significant challenge, but the school seeks their views and invests a huge amount of time and energy helping parents and carers to support their

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children's learning.

Notwithstanding these obvious strengths, the school's development is constrained by weaknesses in its strategic planning. Systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and pupil progress, but self-evaluation is not sharply focused or rigorous enough. Although the school's performance is routinely reported to governors, the school's ambition is not underpinned by robust success criteria. The governing body is very supportive, but cannot fulfil its role as critical friend when school self-evaluation is lengthy rather than precise. The school collects data on individual pupils to track their progress, but not enough use is made of this information to analyse the progress of different groups and the impact of the school's strategies.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is inadequate because it has overlooked the need to plan and evaluate what it does. The school implements a wide range of actions that foster a cohesive school community, but it has not been as effective as it should be in ensuring that pupils develop wider understanding or empathy beyond their immediate experiences.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children clearly enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception and their enthusiasm is palpable as soon as they arrive. They behave very well and have positive attitudes to their work. Children like to explore the rich variety of resources on offer, including the appealing outdoor facilities, with exciting resources for physical activity, confidence building, creativity, problem-solving, language development, contact with the natural

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world and imaginative play. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team and are very successful in ensuring that all children feel valued and are fully involved in all activities. Children are encouraged to investigate and direct their own learning with some carefully crafted opportunities for discussion and the sharing of ideas. For example, during group story time, the children were asked to talk to each other about how to make friends again with someone they had fallen out with. Children demonstrated a good understanding of relationships and the importance of friendships. Children's attainment at the end of the Reception Year is well below national expectations, particularly in calculating and key aspects of communication and language. Children also have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the world. These low outcomes mirror the exceptionally low starting points of some of the children on entry. Nonetheless, the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a firm platform for the children's work in Key Stage 1 because they make good progress in developing the essential disposition and attitudes to make secure gains in later years.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The very small number of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire were positive in their support for the school, although only two made any additional comments. All respondents are happy with their child's experience, and are positive about the aspects of the school that the inspection also found to be particular strengths. Two responses disagreed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and one disagreed that the school kept their child safe. Inspectors investigated these issues but found no evidence to cause concern and judged these aspects of care and support to be particular strengths of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Healdswood Infant and Nursery School 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 just nine completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	78	1	11	1	11	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	67	3	33	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)	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	33	4	44	1	11	1	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	44	4	44	1	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	33	5	56	1	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	67	3	33	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.



5 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Healdswood Infant and Nursery School, Sutton-in-Ashfield NG17 3FQ

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to so many of you and seeing your work. We were also really impressed with the way that you behave around the school and your efforts in class.

As well as speaking with lots of you, we also looked at what some of you wrote in the survey questions and what your parents told us about your school. We could see how much you enjoy your work, particularly when you put your wellies on and go outside, and when you talk about all your after-school activities. There are lots of good things about your school. Here are some of the things we liked best:

- the way that the school cares for you all and makes sure that you all feel safe
- how you try to stay fit and healthy by tucking into the fruit and joining in activities like the 'street dance' so enthusiastically
- the way that you look after each other around the school
- the hard work that the school does to support you and your parents.

It is important that you develop good skills before you move up to junior school, especially in reading and writing. You sometimes make good progress in your lessons, but we have asked the school to work on some things:

- to make sure that you achieve good standards, especially in reading and writing
- to make sure that your work in lessons is never too easy or too difficult
- to make sure that the school checks up on how well it is doing so it can get better, and important things like attendance improve.

You and your parents can help. You can make sure that you always do your best and check that you always follow the advice that you get when your books are marked. Your parents can help by making sure that you come to school regularly and on time.

Thank you, again, for your helpfulness.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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