

Camp Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117136
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312507
Inspection dates	14-15 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	248
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Valerie Stubbs
Headteacher	Miss Sharon Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	17-19 November 2003
School address	Camp Road St Albans Hertfordshire AL1 5PG
Telephone number	01727 851056
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. Almost half the pupils come from White British backgrounds and about one quarter from Sylheti Bangladeshi families, while the rest represent a wide range of ethnic heritages, such as Indian, Pakistani, European and mixed race. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than in most schools and many of them speak little or no English when they start school. The profile of the school is slowly changing, with fewer children with English as an additional language entering Reception than has been the case historically. The proportion taking a free school meal is above average as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. When children enter the Nursery their attainment is mostly well below average, particularly in social and language skills, although this is not the case for all children. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is high. The school has recently been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The local community holds Camp School in very high regard. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about it. One wrote, 'Camp School is like an extended family'. The pupils agree, saying, 'Camp is a brilliant and very special school'. This is a good school. Fundamental to its success is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her deputy. They have developed a committed team of teachers, support staff and governors, who continually strive for improvement. This is a school where every pupil is important. Everything that the school does is closely monitored and initiatives are introduced to eliminate any areas of weakness. For example, the school identified standards in mathematics as being not as high as they should be, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Special programmes to help these pupils develop the mathematical language that they need were introduced and standards are now rising. Support was also put in place to help boys from Bangladeshi backgrounds who were struggling with writing and here, too, standards are rising.

Year groups are often small and standards vary year on year. Sometimes new arrivals speak little or no English. However, all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who find it hard to learn, make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. In 2007, standards in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing, and were average in mathematics. Standards in Year 6 were below average in English, mathematics and science. This year group was not typical because almost half had joined the school after Year 3 and one fifth arrived in Year 6, missing much that the school offers. There are several reasons why pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching is good and the stimulating curriculum, enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors, interests the pupils and encourages them to learn. Excellent partnerships with parents and the many activities provided by the school to help them support their children make a significant impact on progress. The school benefits from its links with many outside agencies. The ratio of adults to pupils is very high, with the result that pupils have plenty of individual and small group help.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, reflecting the caring ethos of this culturally diverse school. Consequently, behaviour is exceptionally good and pupils are polite and friendly. The older pupils take pleasure in their roles in helping the younger ones. Pupils enjoy coming to school, but attendance is slightly below average, despite the school's stringent efforts to improve it. Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support, so that they grow in confidence. The exceptional emphasis on healthy lifestyles and keeping safe means that pupils are particularly knowledgeable about keeping fit. The way in which pupils contribute to the community both in and out of school is excellent. Leadership and management are good. Most subject leaders fulfil their roles effectively, and some are developing them to include the tracking of performance. Governance is outstanding. The governors are very committed and challenge the school to do its best. Self-evaluation is accurate and the good progress since the previous inspection shows that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are very positive about the start their children receive. One wrote, 'The teachers and nursery nurses clearly care about my child's happiness and education.' About a third of the children in Nursery go on to join the Reception class. By this time, attainment is below expectations for their age. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage but few reach national expectations by the beginning of Year 1 because they have so much ground to make up. They achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and staff make learning fun. For example, Nursery children move like a train, making appropriate sounds to encourage them to move in a line. The children love coming to school. One said, 'I love the school as big as 158 blue whales and all the planets in space!' Good leadership of the Foundation Stage ensures that activities meet the children's needs and that the curriculum is relevant and interesting. The school is currently strengthening the leadership of the Foundation Stage by clarifying these roles. All adults take every opportunity to develop the children's language and social skills and behaviour is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics across the school by further extending the strategies already in place.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well. In 2007, the proportion reaching the higher level 3 was above average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, the proportion reaching the higher level 5 was well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Standards this year are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics in Year 2. They are average in English and above average in mathematics in Year 6. More pupils are expected to reach the higher levels. This is a positive outcome from the support given to help pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very keen to learn and do their best. They have an excellent understanding of the diversity of cultures represented in their school and elsewhere. Consequently, they mature into tolerant and caring individuals. They develop a very strong sense of responsibility to their school and local community by acting as eco-champions, peer mediators, who help others to solve their problems, and 'buddies'. The eco-champions help others to learn about recycling, saving water and electricity. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, supported by the excellent systems of guidance. By Year 6, pupils are exceptionally well prepared to stay safe by means of lessons on Internet safety, bullying, and sex and relationships among others. It is no surprise that the school has received a second accreditation as a Healthy School, when Reception children describe the dangers of eating too many sweets and the benefits from exercise. Pupils are building a good foundation for later life and the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations and use interesting methods to motivate the pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to ensure that all pupils, and especially those who find it hard to learn and those who are learning English, get plenty of support to take part in lessons. Lessons begin with an introduction including information for pupils about what they are going to learn. Pace is brisk and teachers use questions well to include all pupils. Different tasks are set according to their attainment. Good relationships mean that pupils are willing to ask questions and behaviour is managed very well. In the very best lessons, pupils are encouraged to check how successful they have been in meeting the purpose of the lesson but this is not consistent. Assessment procedures are good and teachers have a clear view of the next steps in learning. Work is marked well to show what pupils have learned but does not yet include comments that show them how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The imaginative curriculum has been revised this year but has not been in place for long enough to have a noticeable impact on achievement. It is based around the personal, social and health education curriculum with cross-curricular links. It includes practical experiences, sometimes in the extensive grounds, that appeal to the pupils' interests. Provision for English has a high focus and contributes to the improving standards. For example, the younger pupils enjoy the regular 'Phonic Carousel' where pupils from Reception and Key Stage 1 are grouped according to their needs to learn sounds. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 learn French. An exceptionally wide range of activities outside the school day, including some requested by the pupils, enriches the curriculum. Art has a high profile, with many attractive displays of high quality.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an extremely caring school. A parent wrote, 'The children are all individually nurtured and each one is treated with respect.' Procedures for safeguarding pupils and for child protection are in place. Progress is monitored very closely and support is provided for any who are falling behind or leaping ahead. Those who need extra help with English, mathematics or behaviour are identified early. Parents are helped to become involved with their children's learning, for example through basic literacy and numeracy classes, family reading workshops and mathematics courses. Pupils have targets to help them improve in writing and in personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is skilled in acquiring additional funding to provide extra experiences for pupils. Children who may need extra support are identified in the pre-school group so that they can make the best possible start in Nursery. This is already raising standards. Senior staff fulfil their responsibilities effectively. There are

some inconsistencies in middle management where some staff are developing their roles, for example in the tracking of progress. The governors have an excellent understanding of the school through their involvement in planning for school improvement and their thorough monitoring. They have an extremely good understanding of what the school's data tells them. Governors check the outcomes of their decisions, for example, to fund a high number of support staff, which is having a positive impact.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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?	1

¹ Grade 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.

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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



16 April 2008

Dear Children

**Inspection of Camp Primary and Nursery School, St Albans,
Hertfordshire AL1 5PG**

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that you go to a good school and that the adults look after you very well and help you learn. We agree with you. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and by the way that you care for each other and your school. Your knowledge about how to be healthy and keep safe is excellent. It was good to hear about what you do to recycle and save water and electricity. It is very important! We thought you had plenty of interesting things to do both in lessons and in the other activities you can take part in. The teachers and governors who lead your school work extremely hard to make it even better and to give you things that you like to learn. Your families know that you go to a good school where you make good progress.

We have asked Miss Sanderson and the teachers to help you do even better in mathematics and writing, especially those of you who do not speak English at home. You can help by continuing to do your best.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Camp School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne
Lead inspector