



Prae Wood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117315
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280041
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Paul Cosway LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	King Harry Lane
School category	Community		AL3 4HZ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01727 751930
Number on roll	224	Fax number	01727 751931
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Maggy Zimmermann
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Diane John

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 280041
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Prae Wood Primary School is average in size. Most pupils enter the school from the attached nursery. The local population served by the school represents a wide mix of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are mostly of White British heritage, although some are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements, is close to average. The school has been awarded Investors in People status. At the time of the inspection, almost half the staff had been in post for just over a term. The high cost of housing makes recruitment and retention of teachers difficult in this area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is good. There are some outstanding aspects of its work, especially in the ways that it cares for its pupils and promotes excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to work. It is an inclusive school, where everyone is valued and where good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. Standards have improved and are above average. Pupils overall make good progress given their starting points when they enter the school. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage and the children in the nursery and Reception classes achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. The school is very successful in managing the behaviour of almost all pupils. Relationships between the pupils and the adults in the school are outstanding. Consequently, the pupils greatly enjoy school, feel very well cared for and secure. Parents are very pleased that their children attend this school. The partnership between the school and parents is particularly strong and one of the reasons that attendance is above average. The school has procedures in place for tracking the progress pupils make, but they are not yet used consistently by all teachers, because many of them are new. The school is well led and managed. The governors are very effective indeed. There is a very strong sense of teamwork, and staff work very well together to support the headteacher in providing a good quality of education. School self-evaluation is good and improving. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and she is determined that the school will get better and better. She and her senior team have clearly identified what needs to be done to ensure that the school continues to improve. They are developing even further the roles of subject leaders to enable them to monitor teaching and its impact on learning more rigorously. The issues identified in the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. Given the progress that pupils make and the many outstanding aspects of the school's work, it gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment information to ensure that all teachers have an overview of how well pupils are achieving and to help pupils to understand what they have achieved and how they can improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. As the school recognises, all pupils are achieving well and making good progress. Pupils start school with standards that cover a wide range of ability, but overall attainment on entry to the school is average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and almost all achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception Class. Pupils also achieve well through the rest of the school, so that by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those

who are at the early stages of learning English make good progress. Pupils also achieve well in all other subjects, including religious education and information and communication technology. In 2005, standards in mathematics and science improved significantly in Year 2. Pupils attained results that were well above average. There were staffing difficulties in older classes that, over time, have affected the progress that pupils have made. Nevertheless, most pupils met their targets. Attainment was above average in Year 6 during 2005 and is rising. The school did not meet its very challenging targets for Year 6 in 2005 but is on course to meet its equally challenging targets in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school lives up to its vision - 'Everyone valued, Everyone learning'. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils initiate and participate in a wide range of activities to raise funds for charities. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and their responsibility to each other. They also have a very wide understanding of a range of cultures and festivals and these are celebrated through assemblies and other work in school. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy lessons and other activities in the school. Attendance is good. Pupils have a very good appreciation of safety in all aspects of school life. There is also a very good emphasis on being healthy. They are encouraged to eat healthily and there are many opportunities for exercise, both in physical education lessons and the very well attended after school activities and clubs. Pupils understand their responsibilities to the community through participation in the school council. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to take responsibility for an area of the school's organisation. For instance, they choose the music for assemblies and, in Year 6, help in the office at lunchtime. In this way, and in the many opportunities they have to work together in lessons, they are prepared very well for their future life and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress as a result. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Consequently, pupils are extremely well behaved and they work hard, showing great interest and enthusiasm. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan their lessons well, including a good variety of tasks and resources to keep the pupils involved and interested. A feature of all lessons is the way that teachers use white boards as computer screens to present work in an exciting way. They use questioning well to check that pupils understand what they have to do and involve them in their learning by bringing them to the front to demonstrate what they are doing or work on the

whiteboard. Teachers adjust the work to support pupils with differing levels of ability and they are supported well by additional adult helpers. Work is marked regularly, but it does not always make clear to pupils how to improve. Homework is set and parents are keen to support their children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a suitably broad curriculum that enables pupils to learn. There is good planning and provision for children in the Foundation Stage. All the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and teachers plan work well to match the differing needs of pupils in their class. There is very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties, who receive good support in class to meet their needs. Lessons are supplemented well by a good range of visits to places of interest in the locality for all year groups, as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are taken up by almost all the pupils. These include drama, art and science as well as a wide range of sports. Year 6 pupils benefit particularly from a residential visit to Norfolk at the beginning of the school year. This has a great impact on their personal development as well as preparing them very well for work in their final year. There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education, which includes teaching about sex and relationships as well as the misuse of drugs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The inspection endorsed the school's own evaluation that its care and support for its pupils are outstanding. Teachers know pupils very well so are able to support them both in their learning and in their personal development. This is reinforced by the excellent relations that the school has with its parents, who feel their views are listened to and taken into account. They are kept well-informed about their children's progress through consultations and reports as well as more informal discussion. They feel teachers are very approachable. The school also works well with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and there are good procedures to follow up absences from school. Risk assessments are carried out very thoroughly and there are appropriate arrangements in place for child protection. Pupils feel safe in the school and report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and well. The recent introduction of 'communication boxes' in classrooms has given pupils a further way of dealing with issues for which they need support. Older pupils readily help younger ones through schemes such as the buddy system.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, ably assisted by her deputy, gives outstanding leadership and the school is managed very well. She has overcome significant staffing difficulties and under her guidance the school is now

improving rapidly. The headteacher sets very high standards and has such a good rapport with her staff that they are equally committed to raising standards. They all work together well, forming an excellent team. They have identified key areas that needed to be addressed and are tackling them with considerable commitment. The governance of the school is outstanding. Governors are very effective, both in supporting the school and being critical friends. Some co-ordinators are new in post and so have only just begun to lead their subject areas, but others are monitoring the quality of teaching and lesson planning in their subjects and have begun to look in detail at the quality of pupils' work. The headteacher has successfully worked to involve parents more in the work of the school, and the partnership with them is outstanding. They have raised significant funds that have helped to improve the accommodation and resources for the benefit of their children's education. Monitoring and self-evaluation are good and include parent questionnaires and pupil surveys. Senior managers monitor the quality of teaching and learning very effectively and understand how to use assessment information to review the progress of individuals and year groups. All teachers are to be given the information and communication skills that they need to track and analyse pupils' progress in the near future. There is a clear focus throughout the school on helping all to learn effectively. Consequently the school's capacity to improve is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for your help when we visited your school. We were very impressed by the interest you showed in your lessons and by your really excellent behaviour. Your attitude to school is very sensible and grown-up and your parents can be very proud of you. You are kind and friendly to each other too as you were to us! The inspection team has decided that your school is good and that some things about it are very good indeed. It is a school which fully lives up to its motto - 'Everyone Valued, Everyone Learning'. The ways in which it cares for you are outstanding and you tell us that you feel safe and happy. It is preparing you very well for your next school and future life. The teaching is good, sometimes excellent, and you have interesting and enjoyable lessons. This helps you to make good progress. By the time you reach Year 6 many of you are reaching good standards, above those in most other schools. We have asked your teachers to track the progress you are making very carefully, to make sure that you are always set work that will help you to learn. This will help you to make even faster progress. Your school is led very well indeed by your headteacher and you have an excellent set of governors. With your help, they will make sure that your school gets better and better. You have lots of clubs, activities and trips that help you to learn and you help your local community. Your parents think that this is a good school and they are right. Enjoy your time at this lovely school.