



Petts Hill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134217
Local Authority Ealing
Inspection number 282493
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Linda McGill HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Newmarket Avenue
School category	Community		Northolt
Age range of pupils	3–11		UB5 4HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02084224095
Number on roll (school)	210	Fax number	02084225841
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr James Wroath
		Headteacher	Ms Valerie Upton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	13–14 September 2006	282493

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Petts Hill Primary School opened in September 2003 under the Fresh Start scheme. A substantial building project and refurbishment greatly enhanced the environment. Petts Hill replaced an infants' school; numbers on roll have increased each year and this is the first year with a complete junior section. The wide ethnic mix of the pupils reflects the local population and includes a growing number from refugee or asylum-seeking families. Many pupils join and leave the school at different times throughout the year creating high mobility. The socio-economic circumstances of many families are not favourable and half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. About half of the pupils speak English as an additional language and the number who have learning difficulties is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Petts Hill is a good school. It has come a long way since its Fresh Start. As one parent put it; 'there has been stability and positive change'. This change for the better is reflected in good teaching, the increasingly good progress the pupils are making in their learning, their enjoyment of school, their positive attitudes and good behaviour.

The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. She is a strong leader and her clear direction for the school strikes the right balance between striving for academic achievement and fostering the pupils' personal development and well-being. The school has a purposeful ethos and there is an evident commitment to further improvement. The school has a secure knowledge of its strengths and there are clear plans to tackle identified weaknesses.

The headteacher knows that improvements in learning cannot come about without consistently good teaching. With this in mind, teachers and support staff are carefully chosen and given good support to develop and refine their practice. The staff team is enthusiastic and effective. The teaching at Petts Hill is good, overall, and some is outstanding, which contributes substantially to the progress the pupils make. The curriculum is good. A striking feature is the creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) by both pupils and staff.

On starting nursery, many pupils have not achieved what is expected of a typical three-year-old, especially in their language and mathematical skills and personal development. Good teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage helps them make good progress, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal development, and about half reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. In the infant and junior classes, the pupils continue to make good progress. Efforts to improve reading and writing have been successful and some children have made substantial gains. Progress in mathematics is not so marked. The proportion of pupils on track to reach the expected level in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has grown each year. The teachers keep a close eye on everyone's progress and make sure that individual needs are met. This means that those who are learning English or who have learning difficulties make equally as good progress as their classmates. While the school's results are below national averages, the pupils' achievements are good, because they have made a good deal of progress from their low starting points.

The pupils also play a part in the school's success. They respond with interest to good teaching and evaluate their own and others' work, to good effect. Most enjoy school and usually work hard. In a project in Year 6, some pupils described their 'dream school' as one where it was 'warm and happy' and where there would be 'laughter and smiles'. Petts Hill certainly is a happy and caring place; the pupils play and work cheerfully together. The school gives a high priority to helping the pupils develop their social and emotional skills, and has been successful in this. The quality of care the pupils receive is outstanding. Ensuring the pupils' welfare and promoting their academic achievement are central to the school's philosophy.

The good progress the school has made since it opened and the determination of the staff team mean that there is a good capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

* Take steps to make sure that the pupils make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

One of the key factors underpinning the pupils' good progress is the effective system of assessing exactly where they are when they start school and regularly thereafter, in order to provide what is needed to help them make the next steps. The pupils are given challenging targets, and usually meet them. If anyone falls behind, additional support helps them catch up. The school's assessment information shows that no particular groups of pupils are underachieving in relation to their classmates. It also indicates that improvements have not been so swift in mathematics as in English. Although standards remain below average overall, the number of pupils on track to achieve what is expected for their age is increasing year on year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. The pupils are well behaved, courteous and polite. They look after each other, take care of new arrivals and use the 'friendship bench' to make sure everyone is included at playtime. Relationships are based on trust and respect and pupils are confident their views are listened to. The pupils feel safe, secure and free from bullying but know what to do if they are worried or concerned about anything.

The pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard. They take responsibility, for example by representing their class on the school council. Most pupils say they enjoy school. Their good progress, particularly in literacy and ICT, is equipping them well for the future. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of living healthy lifestyles and take part in regular physical activities with enthusiasm. Absence is followed up rigorously and good attendance celebrated; the pupils enjoy receiving certificates for good attendance but levels remain below average.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils know right from wrong and learn a lot about different cultures and religions. They enjoy talks from members of the local community and take an active part in concerts and singing festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is generally good, and is sometimes outstanding. Typically, teachers' planning is thorough and reflects the wide range of needs in the class. The teachers have a detailed knowledge of their pupils' attainment and monitor progress assiduously. They make sure that the pupils know what they are to learn in lessons and how they can judge success for themselves. Teachers and assistants work well with pupils, giving them effective support and managing behaviour sensitively and firmly. Marking is good because it acknowledges pupils' efforts and gives helpful pointers for improvement. This all has a positive effect on progress. The school has a systematic approach to improving the quality of teaching and is working to ensure that it is consistently good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum also contributes to the pupils' progress. The strong emphasis on developing the pupils' literacy skills has been effective. Plenty of time is given to physical activity; three sessions are planned each week. Links between different subjects and ICT are developing well; the school is working towards accreditation for its work in this area. Pupils say that they enjoy practical activities the most. There are good links with other schools which enhance provision, for example, a teacher from a local secondary school has begun to teach French. There is a good range of clubs and activities before and after school. In response to an identified need, the homework club is to take place daily in order to give pupils access to computers and adult support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care the pupils receive is outstanding. The school's calm, warm environment nurtures pupils and enables them to thrive. Systems to protect pupils and secure their health and safety are robust and well organised.

Staff know the pupils very well and work diligently to ensure they, and their parents, are given the support and guidance they need to achieve well and reach their targets. Sensitive arrangements are made to support pupils and their families experiencing difficulties so that they can continue to make progress and be fully involved in school activities.

There is good additional support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Their needs are identified early, reviewed regularly and good use is made of other agencies so pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because of the clear focus on both the academic and personal development of all pupils. As the school has grown, the headteacher has built an effective team which shares her high expectations and works well together. The school's strengths are well understood and areas requiring further development have been clearly identified. Plans for improvement are good. Staff routinely share and extend their expertise. Good quality resources and effective use of outside agencies help pupils make good progress. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and systematic. Information from this and data about how well pupils are doing are used effectively to judge whether actions taken have been successful in bringing about improvements.

Many governors are new, but overall the governing body is knowledgeable and has an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where further developments can be made. Statutory functions are fulfilled conscientiously and governors are increasingly able to challenge as well as support the headteacher.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the 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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming me and my colleague to Petts Hill when we came to inspect recently. It was good to be able to see you at work in the classrooms and at play at break times. It was also very helpful to be able to talk to you and find out what you think about your school.

You and many of your parents told us that you think Petts Hill is a good school. We agree with you. Things that were especially good are:

- and;middle dot; the way the school looks after you

- and;middle dot; how the teachers keep a close eye on your progress and make sure that you do as well as you can

- and;middle dot; the interesting work that you do on computers

- and;middle dot; your good behaviour, friendliness and hard work

- and;middle dot; the way your headteacher, the other staff and the governors are always working to make things better

We have asked the teachers to make sure that you make as much progress in your maths work as you do in English. You can help by keeping up the hard work!

With best wishes,

Linda McGill HMI