



Darrick Wood Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101612
Local Authority Bromley
Inspection number 286125
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Hartland HMI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Lovibonds Avenue
School category	Community		Orpington
Age range of pupils	7–12		BR6 8ER
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01689 857370
Number on roll (school)	382	Fax number	01689 857191
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Shelley Muscatt
		Headteacher	Mr James Turvey
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspection took place at the same time as the inspection of Darrick Wood Infant School which shares the same site.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than the average primary school. Almost all pupils transfer from the adjoining infant school. There are fewer girls than boys overall and a high proportion of boys in Years 5 and 6. A lower than average number receive free school meals with a very few whose first language is not English. Most pupils are of White British origin. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Although there are a lower than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, there are a greater number of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school site houses a special unit for hearing impaired pupils who are included within the school and receive specialist tuition in the unit for part of each day. The school has Healthy School status and holds the DfES ICT mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Darrick Wood Junior provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and exhibits a number of strengths. The school sees itself as providing a good education and it does a number of things well. It is undoubtedly well led by the headteacher who has a clear view of the improvements the school needs to make. The school enables its pupils to achieve above average standards in national tests. More able pupils generally do well in mathematics and science. It offers a broad curriculum which is enriched with a wide range of out-of-hours activities. It provides well for the pupils' personal development. Pupils receive good care and guidance.

The school is a harmonious community in which every child really does matter. It is a highly inclusive school because of the way it caters very well for all pupils with learning difficulties, including those with hearing difficulties and the way, from the earliest years, children are taught to sign. New teams of school leaders are beginning to carry out their responsibilities.

However, although well on the way, the school does not yet ensure that all pupils are consistently making good progress, year on year. Inspection evidence indicates that some pupils are making good progress, but also that others make satisfactory gains in their learning and are not doing as well as they could. The teaching has good features but is satisfactory overall as it varies in quality throughout the school and does not always meet the needs of more able pupils.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection having taken decisive action to improve writing but more needs to be done, especially to ensure more able pupils reach the highest levels. The school has a satisfactory, but improving, capacity for further improvement as shown by the results in the 2006 tests and future plans. Clear strategies for improvement have been put in place but these have not yet improved the quality of teaching sufficiently to bring about the necessary improvements in pupils' achievement. Systems to track the progress of individual pupils and to set clear and challenging targets are secure in English but pupils are not always sufficiently aware about how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop, more rapidly, the quality of teaching and learning so as to bring about improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Ensure systems for monitoring teaching and learning are robust.
- Extend the systems for the tracking of individual pupils' progress and the setting of targets across the core subjects making sure that the pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to improve.
- Provide a curriculum and learning activities which meet the needs of more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall pupils enter the school with levels of ability that are well above average. By the time they leave the school they attain standards that are above average. The overall results of the 2006 tests in Year 6 show a good improvement on those of the previous year especially for writing. They came close to the measure for exceptionally high standards and to meeting the school's targets. They are the successful outcome of considerable efforts by the school to raise attainment. The large group of more able pupils generally do well in gaining the higher levels, in mathematics but more especially in science.

Nevertheless, despite improving the good standards, inspection and the school's own analysis of the test results show that overall the pupils' progress is not better than satisfactory overall. Progress across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and of groups of pupils, is too varied and inconsistent over time. This means that a significant number of pupils have not done as well as they could, especially in English and mathematics. There have been shortfalls in the expected achievements for some pupils in English for some years. The school knows this and has started, with some success, to tackle the problem. The actions taken so far are not yet having sufficient impact on the progress of those pupils who are not doing as well as expected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect the needs of others and think about the world around them. They learn to get on well together and to express their emotions positively. In turn they are considerate to one another and take care to make sure that no one feels left out. Their enjoyment of school is clear from their very good and attentive behaviour in class. Attendance is consistently good. Pupils feel safe and know that there is an adult to turn to if they have a problem. The strong focus on the individual makes each pupil feel valued. One pupil summed this up in the words 'everyone is kind and caring'.

Pupils appreciate the way the school encourages them to lead a healthy lifestyle, especially the opportunities to take up sport in lunchtime clubs. The school works in effective partnership with outside organisations to promote the physical health and well-being of pupils. They show a good commitment to the school community through the school council, and are well prepared for 'workplace' skills when taking responsibility for serving the school as house captains. They make an effective contribution to the outside community by celebrating each other's cultures and raising money for good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with many good features although ranging in quality across the school. This results in pupils making satisfactory but inconsistent progress. Assessment in literacy and numeracy is used well to group pupils for teaching purposes and to devise a good programme of activities. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, so that pupils are confident, feel valued and contribute well in some lessons. Staff manage pupils well and teaching assistants give excellent support to those needing help. Learning is good when the lesson has a brisk pace, clear learning outcomes and interesting tasks, with work appropriate to the pupils' abilities. When there are long periods of whole-class teaching, the pace slows, pupils' interest wanes and they do not achieve their best. Many teachers ask pupils to share ideas with a 'talk partner', which enhances their confidence, involvement and the quality of their contributions.

The school recognizes that it needs to provide better activities for more able pupils as the level of challenge and pace in lessons varies too much. This factor accounts for some of the inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching and pupil progress. The good teaching more actively involves the pupils in the learning process and challenges them to think through problems for themselves. High expectations are less evident in some classes. Marking for improvement is underdeveloped in giving children clear feedback on what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and meets the needs of most children well, but planning to meet the needs of more able pupils is less well developed. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development as well as on basic skills. There is a very wide range of enrichment activities available for the pupils including after-school and lunchtime sports clubs, with opportunities to learn musical instruments and social skills groups. All have a positive impact on the pupils' behaviour around the school, their ability to work in teams and on their self esteem. The pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of clubs available to them including the shared breakfast club at the infant school.

The number of small teaching groups in place is a testament to how well the staff know, and seek to meet, the needs of the pupils. The inclusion of hearing impaired pupils is good with a flexible provision to meet individual needs. Staff make good links with the infant and secondary schools to aid transition. Music and information and communication technology are particular strengths. Many pupils learn to play an instrument and perform in school productions. Interactive whiteboards are well used by staff to engage the pupils and they are used by pupils themselves. The curriculum is further enriched through visits, outings and using the school grounds for art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with specific care needs and they receive excellent pastoral care from the staff including the well-trained and dedicated teaching assistants. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters, and the relevant procedures are in place, including child protection and risk assessments. Lunchtime clubs provide effective support and help pupils to learn to get on well with each other. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive very effective support which enables them to make good progress. There is good liaison with the staff in the Hearing Impaired Unit. The school promotes well the development of safe and healthy living styles. Academic guidance, through the tracking of pupils' progress and target-setting, is good in some respects and in English, but is not yet current practice across all core subjects. The teachers know the pupils' targets but the pupils themselves are not all sufficiently clear about how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher provides good leadership with a clear view of the direction the school should take and well conceived plans to bring about improvements. He has renewed a whole-school drive for improvement and enabled staff to share his vision and to work together to achieve common goals. Actions to bring about improvements to teaching are beginning to yield results. However, some necessary developments are taking too long to become fully embedded across the school and thus second nature to all the staff. The new senior leadership team and recently appointed curriculum team leaders are beginning to have an impact in improving the outcomes for children but have yet to carry out all aspects of their monitoring role. Work with pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well managed.

The school evaluates much of its work accurately and consults widely. It recognises most areas where improvements are needed. Effective management systems, staff training and good links with advisers and other agencies have supported the improvements taking place. Some judgements on the quality of teaching are too generous. There has been too little detailed analysis of the results of different groups of pupils and of individual pupils.

Governors ensure the school meets all its legal responsibilities and play an increasingly active and effective role in improving the work of the school and holding it to account. They do not yet have a good enough grasp of the difference between standards and achievement. Governors are helpfully involved in meetings with the infant school and the Hearing Impaired Unit. Parental responses to a recent questionnaire are mostly positive about the school's leaders and staff and indicate that their children enjoy

school. Parents praise the genuine care shown to their children, but a very small minority raised concerns about the quality of some of the teaching.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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

I am writing to you following the inspectors' recent visit to your school to let you know what we think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to us about your work and what you think about the school.

We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that it is good in a number of ways. It is getting better all the time. The school provides you with a broad range of subjects to learn and lots of different out-of-school activities. We saw, and your parents told us, that everyone in your school takes good care of you and you get on well with each other. We were very impressed with the way all of you are learning to communicate with those of you who have hearing difficulties. We know you enjoy coming to school, because you told us. You also told us that you feel safe and that there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem.

You show enthusiasm, behave well and work hard in lessons and as a result do well in the tests you take in Year 6. Your parents are happy with the school and with what it provides for you. Your headteacher is a good leader. He along with the teachers and other adults are working hard to make the school even better for you. The headteacher knows that to make the school better he needs to:

- Help all teachers to become equally good by keeping a check on the quality of teaching across the school.
- Ensure teachers use the best methods in lessons to meet your different learning needs, especially those of you who find the learning easy, so that you all make good progress.
- Ensure all staff keep a careful eye on your progress and provide you with clear feedback on your work so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.

May I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ian Hartland Her Majesty's Inspector