



Darrick Wood Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101613
Local Authority Bromley
Inspection number 286126
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Lovibonds Avenue
School category	Community		Orpington
Age range of pupils	3–7		BR6 8ER
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01689 857 278
Number on roll (school)	323	Fax number	01689 854 118
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Shelley Muscatt
		Headteacher	Mrs Madeleine Laid
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2002		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 286126
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. Darrick Wood Junior School was inspected at the same time as the inspection of Darrick Wood Infant school which shares the same site.

Description of the school

Darrick Wood Infant School is larger than average. A large majority of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups, although fewer than usual are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The pupils have a variety of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. A unit for pupils with hearing impairment is situated on the school site, and these pupils are integrated into the school for part of each day. This means that, although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average, a greater number of pupils have statements of special educational need. A breakfast club and after-school care are provided on the school site by an independent company. Almost all pupils transfer to the adjoining junior school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Darrick Wood Infant School is a good school. It provides a good quality of education and outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. A focus on the individual pupil is central to all that the school does. Pupils say, 'It is good at this school, everybody helps you'.

The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and of how it can improve. Since her appointment in September 2005, she has developed a strong and effective leadership team, supported by well motivated staff. All who work in the school share the same commitment to bring about improvement. Leadership roles have been reviewed and those for subject leaders are developing well. However, the school has identified that more can be done to increase subject leaders' involvement in, and understanding of, whole school development.

Pupils' achievement is good. The effective provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start to their learning. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high. The early identification of pupils' needs, and intervention to support them appropriately, contributes significantly to the good achievement of the pupils.

The outstanding levels of care provided by the school ensure that pupils' personal and academic needs are met very well. Pupils from the Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) are integrated very successfully into the school for some of their lessons. Those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are very well supported, so that they make rapid progress. Most parents greatly appreciate all that the school does. As one parent said, 'We consider ourselves privileged to send our child to Darrick Wood'. Another commented, 'Our child can't wait to go back to school after weekends and holidays'.

The fun that is provided through the stimulating curriculum and good teaching fosters enjoyment of learning in the pupils. They behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Whilst they are keen to come to school, a few regularly arrive late. Attendance is below average because of holidays taken during term time. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe increases through the school's interesting curriculum and the effective procedures for managing behaviour. The school's intensive focus on teaching basic skills helps them to prepare well for life beyond school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the involvement of subject leaders in whole school development
- Work with parents to reduce unauthorised absence and improve punctuality

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' achievement is good and standards are high. The children's skills when they enter the Foundation Stage are wide ranging and vary from year to year. Most children have skills that are typical or better than those generally found in three-year-olds. The good provision in the Foundation Stage enables them to make good progress. By the end of the Reception year, most children reach the expected goals, and many exceed them, in several areas of learning. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 builds on this good start. However, there is no complacency among staff and they strive continually for improvement. After identifying that fewer pupils might achieve the higher Level 3 in writing, the school implemented strategies to improve this proportion and is rightly continuing this work. As part of this initiative, it is increasing its focus on the teaching of letter sounds. Analysis of data indicates that all groups of pupils make good progress, and some higher attaining pupils make very good progress. The school's new tracking procedures are being used well to monitor pupils' progress and provide additional support where needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and well-being of the pupils shows in their happy, smiling faces. They enjoy eating healthy foods in school and taking part in sports and exercise. As a result, they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school is developing this further as it works to gain the Healthy Schools Award. Activities, such as agreeing a behaviour code for their class, planning a menu and shopping for the food, equip the pupils well with skills for later life. The school's actions to improve punctuality and attendance have begun to bring about improvement, but more needs to be done. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The strength of the relationships within the school helps pupils to feel secure and develops their self esteem. Their cultural understanding develops well through subjects such as art, music and literature. Pupils accept responsibilities readily and greatly value the opportunities they are given to influence school development through the school council. For instance, they are very pleased that their request for mirrors in the toilets has been granted. Charity work, both locally and further afield enables pupils to contribute to the community, and the school is increasing these opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning contribute to the pupils' good achievement. The interesting activities and very good relationships create a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils become enthusiastic learners. Pupils in Year 2 were very keen to plan and write

stories based on *The Billy Goats Gruff*, using different characters. The sharing with pupils of the purpose of the lesson helps them to know what they are intended to learn. When teachers mark the pupils' work, although they usually tell them how well they have done, opportunities to explain what they need to do next to improve are sometimes missed. Joint planning in year groups helps to provide continuity of learning across classes of the same age. As part of its drive to improve writing, the school has recognised that it needs to plan more opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and to use writing purposefully in other subjects. Support staff work well with small groups of pupils, including assisting those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In the Foundation Stage, the good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities motivates the children to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is well balanced and is enhanced effectively through visitors to school and after-school clubs, which enrich pupils' academic, personal and social development. The curriculum is currently being revised to make it more creative. Special events, such as an art week and lessons in French, greatly enrich the provision. Adjustments to the planning of the curriculum enable pupils of all abilities to participate as fully as they can, this being particularly the case for pupils with learning difficulties and those from the HIU. In the Foundation Stage, the stimulating curriculum meets individual needs well and is especially successful in supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school is developing its focus on teaching basic skills across different subjects and this is helping to reinforce learning in reading, writing and information and communication technology (ICT).

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school establish an environment in which pupils feel greatly valued. Parents affirm this, saying, 'We could not be more pleased with the level of care and the progress made'. Processes to keep pupils safe are robust. Systems for behaviour management are well understood by pupils and are very effective. Support is provided for pupils who need help to develop their social skills. Liaison with the staff in the HIU is excellent and promotes the academic and personal development of these pupils very effectively. The school uses outside agencies very successfully to support the well-being and development of all of the pupils, and in particular, those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Academic guidance is good. The school sets targets for pupils, and involves them successfully in reviewing their progress. Support for pupils when they join the school, and when they prepare to move on to the junior school, is very well considered. Academic records and meetings between Year 2 and Year 3 teachers provide comprehensive information about the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and contribute significantly to the good progress made by the pupils. The school's process for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and in planning for school improvement is comprehensive and the outcomes are accurate. The process successfully involves the staff and governors and seeks and values the views of parents and pupils. The influence of subject leaders over teaching and learning in their subjects has been increased, and this work is continuing. The school acknowledges that the leadership and management roles of the subject leaders could be developed to include a greater whole school dimension.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide the headteacher with a good balance of support and challenge. Some governors are also members of the junior school governing body. This is beginning to provide good opportunities to improve communication and develop more shared practice between the schools.

Initiatives, such as promoting healthy eating, improving provision for ICT and increasing continuity between the nursery and reception classes, have contributed to recent school improvement. The success of these initiatives indicates that the school has good capacity to improve.

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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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 for making me feel welcome when I visited you recently, and for talking to me about your school. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

You think that your school is a good place to be and I agree with you. You learn well and do better in reading, writing and mathematics than children in most other schools. You told me that you enjoy being in school and feel safe there. All of the grown ups look after you extremely well and you know that they will always help you if you are upset or worried. Your teachers give you lots of interesting things to do and you told me how much you like events such as art week and the after-school clubs.

Although you enjoy school, some of you are often late and some take holidays during term time. This happens in your school more than in most other schools in the country. It is really important for you to be in school on time every day unless you are ill, so that you do not miss learning important things. I have asked the teachers to keep working with your parents and carers to make sure you are at school when you should be.

All of the teachers help the headteacher to manage the school well and I have asked them to keep finding more ways to do this so that your school becomes even better.

You eat lots of fruit and vegetables in school and are involved in many sports. These things help you to be healthy. You behave well and show that you care for each other, and this helps to make your school a happy place. I am pleased that you enjoy sharing your ideas for making your school better through your school council.

I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward Lead inspector