

Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102389
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	286357
Inspection dates	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 - 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Spencer
Headteacher	Mrs S Y Tuffey
Date of previous school inspection	8 -11 July 2002
School address	Dawlish Drive Ruislip Manor, Ruislip HA4 9SF
Telephone number	01895 634180
Fax number	01895 634684

Age group	3 - 7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. A fifth of pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. Their main home languages are Panjabi and Urdu. An average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on admission varies from year to year and is generally lower than that expected of three-year-olds, especially in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, personal development and well-being and care, guidance and support, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with parents, children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

There are many outstanding features to this good school. The staff are highly successful in helping the children to meet its aims of 'Learning together, achieving together and stepping out in confidence', because of the exceptional levels of care provided. Almost all parents justifiably lavish praise on the school for the way it focuses on meeting the needs of every child. As one wrote, 'What a fantastic teaching staff this school has'. Likewise the children say how happy they are because the teachers make learning fun and care for them.

Children get off to a cracking start in the Nursery where they quickly adapt to working and playing with others. Teachers in the Reception classes build on these foundations and children make rapid progress and achieve well, especially in reading and writing. The curriculum is exciting and achieves the right balance between children making choices and staff guiding them to activities. These early learning experiences result in most children attaining levels which are at least on a par with those expected for their age. They make the most progress in their personal, social and emotional development because staff are skilful in identifying everyone's needs and they provide high levels of support. As one parent said, 'each child is treated as an individual and staff know them all'.

The children are inquisitive learners. They have excellent attitudes to their work and to others. Consequently, lessons are calm and purposeful and children focus very well on their work and are attentive listeners. Through the school's excellent programme for personal, social, health and emotional development (PSHE) the children excel in their awareness of making choices. They confidently talk about the importance of healthy eating and enthusiastically describe their physical education lessons and other activities which help them to be fit. Because they have trusting relationships with adults they say they feel safe and they particularly like having friendship buddies to talk to in the playground. The outstanding curriculum enhances children's enjoyment of school. Many visits, visitors and special events contribute much to children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Excellent partnerships with other agencies and schools contribute much to the provision for those with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English. This awareness is enhanced through the use of children's own family backgrounds and experiences. As one parent said, 'although we are from different backgrounds we are all valued'. As a result, children from all cultural, religious and racial backgrounds value one another, enjoy learning and achieve well.

The rich curriculum also contributes substantially to children's academic skills. Staff forge strong links between subjects so that the children apply their good writing skills in religious education and history. The school recognises that for children to be successful they need to be secure and they make excellent use of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project. This project helps children to explore their feelings and ideas and is often seen in action in the classroom. In one English lesson about Goldilocks the children were not only able to retell the story in the correct sequence but added great detail about the rights and wrongs of the treatment of the three bears. Another strong feature in the teaching is the way staff encourage the children to cooperate and to negotiate. These qualities together with their good skills in reading, writing and mathematics prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning.

Teaching and learning are good. Strengths include thorough preparation of lessons and detailed planning which takes account of the children's abilities. Support staff have high level skills and are especially effective in asking questions which move learning on. All staff use praise to encourage the children and any incidents of unsettled behaviour are turned into opportunities to build children's confidence and to help them to get back on track. An excellent feature of the teaching is the way that those with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified and nurtured. As a result, these children play a full part in lessons and not only achieve exceptionally well but also often attain levels which are at least average. In an outstanding mathematics lesson which used an interactive whiteboard to stimulate learning the children buzzed with excitement as they scored goals having correctly answered a mathematical problem. Regular assessments of progress and well focused targets and marking help children to understand what they need to do to improve. However, this information is not always used sufficiently well to make sure that the more able are challenged. The overuse of worksheets in some lessons also restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their writing.

There are several reasons why the school has outstanding capacity to improve. Standards have risen consistently over several years and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The outstanding leadership and management by this high performing team has also brought success in tackling issues from the previous inspection such as improving provision and standards in information and communication technology. The headteacher leads with vision and flair and has excellent skills in delegating responsibility. Senior staff and middle managers contribute much and have identified and begun to tackle the issues through a well crafted plan which clearly focuses on the central areas for development. Because they incisively analyse data and individual performance they make sure that any gaps in learning are filled. Teachers are called to account for their work and there are well developed procedures to support their improvement. The governing body plays a very effective part in supporting and challenging the school. Financial decisions are taken in the best interests of the children and one recent success has been the appointment of staff to support vulnerable pupils which has had an immense impact on the quality of their learning. This is a school which inspires confidence in the children. As one parent wrote, 'Most importantly, when I leave my child at school everyday I know that she is safe and above all happy'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge for more able pupils.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, relying less on worksheets.

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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
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

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.

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.



22 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Lady Bankes Infant School, Ruislip. HA4 9SF

What a lovely day I had at your school. It was great to see how it is getting better all the time. It is a good school and lots of things about it are outstanding.

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I know that you really like coming to school. You help to make it a special place and it was lovely to see how well you get on with each other and how carefully you listen to your teachers. I was very impressed with how hard you work. Your handwriting is really good and makes your work look neat and tidy.

You obviously find learning fun and enjoy lessons, extra activities and visits. Nearly all of your parents said how happy they are that you are looked after so well. Like me, they think that your headteacher and teachers do a really good job in looking after you and helping you to be happy. It was good to see how caring you are and I was very impressed by the friendship buddies who look after you in the playground. You also work hard and are good at reading, writing and mathematics. I really enjoyed looking at some of the work you have done using a computer and it was great to see you joining in lessons using interactive whiteboards.

The teachers make lessons interesting and those of you who need extra help get it. I have asked the teachers to give some of you even harder work because I was so pleased with how you are learning. I have also asked them to find different ways for you to write your answers so that you do not have as many worksheets. You can help to make the school even better by working as hard as possible.

Thank you again for helping to make my day interesting. I hope you will always be as happy at school.

Sean O'Toole
Lead Inspector