

Weald Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118283
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291075
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Hayes
Headteacher	J Gynell
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Long Barn Road Weald Sevenoaks TN14 6PY
Telephone number	01732 463307
Fax number	01732 463307

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Inspection number	291075

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this smaller than average size school are White British. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year. Overall it is slightly higher than that found in most schools. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Two of the five classes have job shares.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Weald Primary is a thriving and caring school at the heart of its local community. It provides a good education for its pupils in a family atmosphere in which pupils' personal development is outstanding. One pupil puts it, 'everyone likes each other'. Under the dynamic leadership of its headteacher, the school has made substantial progress since the last inspection. Parents support the school strongly and speak highly of the provision offered. Typical of others, one parent notes the continued headway that her children are making on an academic level and writes, 'This progression, facilitated by a backdrop of nurturing support, enables my children to wholeheartedly enjoy their education'.

Over time pupils have been achieving well and by the end of both Years 2 and 6 they reach above average standards. Very significant numbers of pupils reach the higher levels. Good teaching and learning ensure that this continues. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and make rapid gains in learning key skills that contribute effectively to their later success. By Year 2 progress in reading is particularly strong, but results fell back in 2006 in writing and mathematics after an overall trend of rising attainment. Some of the reasons for this have been identified and tackled successfully, which has started to redress the situation. However, key literacy and numeracy skills are not reinforced enough in other subjects.

Staff are deeply committed both to the pupils' welfare and to their progress. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and any concerns acted on so that they quickly pick up on lost ground. Care, guidance and support are good with a particular strength in the pastoral aspect.

The very strong links and involvement with the local community and pupils' developing links with Malawi profit their personal development extremely well. Pupils are confident. They approach their studies seriously and behave very well. Their mature outlook on life is shown in their conscientious attitudes to their responsibilities and to the needs of others, raising money by their own efforts to benefit good causes. Their enjoyment of school shines through and is reflected in their above average attendance.

The curriculum is good. It is thoughtfully planned. The imaginative use of visits and first-hand experiences helps to secure pupils' understanding of their work. Curriculum planning is managed well for the mixed-age classes. Large numbers of pupils take part in the good range of extra-curricular opportunities, which actively contributes to their good understanding of healthy and safe living.

The governing body fulfils its duties diligently and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Leadership and management are good. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly perceptive when they monitor provision and pupils' actual work. This is a school that is keen to take on advice and do the best for its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enhance pupils' writing and mathematics skills further by providing more opportunities for pupils to apply them purposefully in all learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and all pupils achieve well. Foundation Stage children make good progress in key areas of learning and frequently reach an above expected level. Pupils up to Year 6 continue this good achievement, including those with learning difficulties. In recent years, approximately half of the Year 6 pupils have attained the higher level. Above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 partly result from very aspirational targets, although understandably not all pupils quite reach these. The trend of above average attainment at the end of both Years 2 and 6 looks set to continue despite a significant number of current Year 6 pupils having learning difficulties. Whist reading is a particular strength, results in writing and mathematics fell in Year 2 in 2006. The school is tackling this by giving pupils more real-life problems to solve in mathematics and by improving pupils' grasp of sentence structure in writing. However, some opportunities to 'push home' these improved ways of learning are sometimes lost in other subjects. Girls tend to outperform boys overall but in line with the national picture.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very polite. Their behaviour is excellent. They are most welcoming and talk eagerly to visitors about how much they enjoy school. They understand and practise healthy living. Many walk to school. They show a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Their wide range of responsibilities, including roles as playground friends, supporting the youngest children and organising fund raising events for the benefit of others, contribute very significantly to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their links with pupils in Malawi has widened significantly their understanding of how others live and their needs. Pupils have a voice and sensitively make known their requests for improvements. They undertake their various duties very responsibly. Their efforts contribute very significantly to the smooth running of the school community. They make a positive contribution to the local community, singing in the local church and celebrating May Day on the village green. Pupils respect each other and know what makes a good citizen. They are very well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships between staff and pupils secure a good working atmosphere in all classes, including the Foundation Stage, and so pupils take learning seriously. Staff manage pupils well and strive hard to successfully meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Effective use of assessment helps to nurture pupils' strengths and address individual weaknesses. As a result, staff often cater well for pupils' different abilities with effective arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties. Where teachers provide real-life problems in mathematics, pupils' curiosity is stimulated and high quality learning for all results. However, opportunities for pupils to practise these skills, or extend writing skills across all subjects, are sometimes lost. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning. A good emphasis is given to discussion and pupils listen well to others' contributions. Marking is usually good with comments that help pupils' progress. The two job share arrangements work

effectively because of the complementary skills of those involved and the widening of the range of expertise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Overall the curriculum, including the Foundation Stage, is planned effectively and carefully to meet statutory requirements and the needs of different ages. It is enhanced by the teaching of French. There is, however, scope for using pupils' writing and mathematics skills more purposefully across the curriculum and structuring some of the child-initiated activities more purposefully in the Reception class. Good use of the local environment and visits to places of interest, such as Hever Castle, help pupils to gain a good understanding of their work. Imaginatively planned events, such as Africa Week and Victorian Day, often incorporate a great sense of fun, keep the curriculum fresh and widen pupils' knowledge successfully. Good use of local services' personnel, combined with the well structured provision for personal, social and health education, supports pupils' good understanding of healthy and safe living. The wealth of extra-curricular activities for all age groups, with very strong provision in sport, contributes extremely well to pupils' all-round development. Effective use of ICT enhances their skills with computers and other technological learning devices.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding. The school works closely with other agencies, the church, with parents and the community. Consequently, staff have a good knowledge of their pupils and ensure they are very well cared for. The school promotes pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem very well. Pupils are treated with respect and listened to. In return they show a high level of care and concern for each other. The good links with the pre-school and secondary schools support effective transfer arrangements. New children settle well into the school. Child protection procedures are well established. Risk assessments are conscientiously undertaken for visits out of school and health and safety procedures are most effective.

Assessment procedures are good. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and intervention activities undertaken for those who may be falling behind. Pupils are aware of their literacy and numeracy targets, although they are not always reminded about these before their activities. Procedures to enable pupils to self-assess their own work using specific criteria and to facilitate their understanding of their progress against the intended learning in lessons are still developing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's strong and successful leadership, together with the good support of the leadership team and other staff, has enabled the school to drive itself forward since the last inspection. For example, significant improvements have been made in ICT and in school development planning. Regular monitoring arrangements support the school's view of itself and the progress that it is making. Subject leaders have become more perceptive in analysing provision picking up some potential improvement issues, such as occasional over-use of worksheets and a lack of consistency in the presentation of pupils' work. This is enhancing overall learning quality.

Governance is good. Governors are committed and well informed. The governing body has a good perception of the school's strengths and areas for development through its monitoring visits and regular contact with the school. Its good support and questioning approach enhance its effectiveness.

Leadership analyses results from tests perceptively. For example, it has delved into the reasons for the dip in results in writing and mathematics in Year 2 in 2006 and is now taking positive action to redress the situation. Rigorous analysis is made of annual testing to pick out weaker areas.

The good arrangements for performance management include all staff and the outcomes of these inform professional development and the school improvement plan. There is a buzz in this school because it is a school that is always looking for ways to improve itself. Excellent progress since the last inspection has ensured outstanding value for money. It demonstrates a good capacity to improve even further.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	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.

Annex A

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	1
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	1
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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weald Primary School, Sevenoaks, TN14 6PY Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited you. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work and your school. You obviously enjoy your lessons and school life in general and make lots of good friends. You take part enthusiastically in the extra activities after school and at lunchtimes. You make good progress in your work and achieve well. Many of you reach a standard that is above expectations for your age. We found teaching to be good and you learn well. You behave very well. We think that your personal development is outstanding. We were most impressed by the wide range of responsibilities that you have, the way that you help each other and your consideration for others. You clearly raise very large sums of money for needy people through the events that you organise yourselves. You obviously enjoy the activities that are arranged in the village and take part enthusiastically in these. You are indeed a very valued part of the community and the community appreciates your involvement, such as at the May Fair on the village green.

The curriculum is good. Teachers plan the curriculum very carefully so that pupils of different ages in the same class are taught appropriate content. The staff take very good care of you and ensure that you are aware of how to live healthily and safely. The leadership and management of the school are good and your headteacher has worked very hard with the staff to make good improvements since the last inspection.

Although you make good progress in your work, we think that you could make even better progress if the teachers could provide you with more opportunities to use your writing in different lessons. We also feel that you should be given more opportunities to use mathematics to solve problems and to apply your mathematics knowledge to real-life situations. We have asked the teachers to do this when they plan activities for you.

We would like to wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to enjoy the rest of your education and work hard so that eventually you will achieve your ambitions.

With every good wish,

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector