



Beacon Hill Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124978
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293155
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beacon Hill Road
School category	Community		Hindhead
Age range of pupils	4–11		GU26 6NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01428 605597
Number on roll (school)	183	Fax number	01428 609150
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Chris Grimes
		Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Dennett
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, located in a village close to Hindhead, is smaller than most. Standards on entry are broadly average. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities varies in each year, it is average overall. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and few are at an early stage of speaking English. There is some variation in pupils' socio-economic circumstances, but these are generally advantaged. The school is based in two sites, with the Reception and Year 1 pupils being taught in a house a short walk away from the main building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is satisfactory overall, but with some good features. The adults' caring approach sets a good example for pupils, who respond by being kind and considerate to each other. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils confidently explain why a good diet and exercise are important. In spite of its small size, the school succeeds well in offering opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of sports. The enthusiasm with which the pupils take these up is reflected in their regular successes in competition with other schools. The school strongly encourages pupils to take on responsibilities and participate in activities within the local community and the pupils readily respond. Quality and standards are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The adults ensure that children settle in well and plan appropriate learning activities. Consequently the children make a good start on their social skills and a sound beginning in developing their literacy and numeracy.

Overall, standards are average which, taking account of pupils' starting points, represents a satisfactory level of achievement. This is because teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are quite often good, but not consistently so because teachers have too few opportunities to share good practice. Teachers have improved the way in which they teach numeracy and literacy. As a result, achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and Year 2 standards have risen to above average levels. It is not yet having full impact on pupils in Years 3 to 6 however, where achievement is satisfactory and standards in English, mathematics and science are average. The school keeps careful records of each pupil's progress and is improving the way in which it uses these to give each the guidance and support that they need. Some teachers use this well to show pupils what they need to do to improve, but this is not yet systematic or consistent enough to provide well for all pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is dedicated to the success and happiness of pupils and has the support and confidence of all staff and most parents in taking the school forward. Strategies to secure improvement have had an impact in some areas, but not yet in others. The school has worked effectively to encourage good attendance and this has resulted in rectifying previously unsatisfactory attendance that had been an obstacle to pupils' progress. Steps taken to improve standards have raised these in Year 2, but not yet in Year 6. The school is appropriately focused on the areas still needing improvement. This and its track record show that its capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve teaching and learning by sharing more effectively the good practice that exists in the school.
- Use assessment information more systematically and consistently to guide and support pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and have average standards by Year 6. When children leave the Foundation Stage many are still not fully successful in using language to communicate meaning, but most are making satisfactory progress towards this. Improvements to the way reading, writing and mathematics are taught are beginning to have an impact in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, most pupils can develop their ideas in clear and mainly correct writing. Their understanding of numerical language helps them to deal well with mathematical problems. The impact is not yet being fully felt by the oldest pupils. Current standards are average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils are soundly developing their writing skills, although many have still to master a range of styles to meet particular purposes. This is, for example, reducing the quality of the pupils' descriptions of scientific investigations. Most can deal with the expected range and difficulty of mathematical problems, but relatively few show above average skills or independence. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to make good progress in writing, showing that the improved approaches to teaching this are beginning to have an impact. The school succeeds in ensuring that no groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve less well than the others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because it is an easy place in which to make friends. As one said, 'You settle in quickly because teachers and other children help. No-one leaves you out because you are new'. Relationships are good and pupils say that teachers make lessons interesting for them. As a result, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start in their personal, social and emotional development. Older pupils are friendly, confident and keen to take on responsibilities, for example, as buddies and house representatives. Pupils feel that their views are valued. School council members point to the re-painted toilets as an example of the school taking account of pupils' views. Parents comment that the school 'encourages its pupils to become enthusiastic members of the village community'. School sports teams are successful at local, county and national levels. Pupils' development of literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for their future learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Cultural events such as 'International Day', French lessons and visits to places of worship help pupils to understand the cultural diversity in society, preparing them well as future citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most teachers succeed in promoting good relationships that encourage pupils to be willing workers. They plan activities so that these provide appropriately for pupils' different needs and abilities. In some lessons, activities go on for too long, so that a few pupils lose their concentration. Teachers and teaching assistants usually work effectively together to ensure that pupils who need extra help receive this. However, pupils are occasionally left to struggle for too long on their own, with tasks that they do not fully understand, so that they lose confidence. In some classes, teachers provide very good challenge in a way that encourages pupils to be enthusiastically involved and eager to be successful. These qualities are not seen consistently enough, however. The school is aware that teachers have too few opportunities to share their best practice and is planning to improve this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with good features. It helps pupils to develop the sound basic skills and good personal and social skills they need in the next stage of their education. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately as a teaching tool and to support pupils' work in other subjects. The youngest children do not have Internet access in their annexe, but teachers make sure that they have a supply of useful and interesting programs. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, which are becoming increasingly effective in literacy lessons, are not yet planned well enough in other subjects. Pupils learn about healthy living and how to be safe through the effective personal, social, citizenship and health education programme. They enjoy the way that some aspects are taught through drama by a visiting arts group. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits, visitors, modern language lessons and special events such as Book Week. These effectively support pupils' learning and contribute to their academic and personal development. Pupils also participate enthusiastically in the wide range of clubs and other activities. These add greatly to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall but pastoral care is good. Adults work well together to make the school a safe, welcoming place in which every child is valued. Pupils feel safe because there is always an adult to go to if they are in difficulty. Parents appreciate the buddy system, which gives older pupils responsibility and, '...helps the youngest feel secure and unintimidated by the eldest'. Procedures for child protection and risk assessment are robust and all adults in school are fully aware of their responsibilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities

are given sound support to achieve the targets in their individual education plans, helping them to make similar progress to their classmates. Academic guidance and support is satisfactory, but inconsistent. Some teachers are making increasingly effective use of assessment data to help pupils know the next steps in their learning. However, the targets some teachers set are not always specific enough for pupils to know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has systematic methods for monitoring its performance and regularly finds out the views of pupils and parents. Most parents think that the school communicates well with them and takes good account of their concerns, but a small number do not. The school has a generally sound understanding of its quality and performance, although it has overestimated these in a few areas. Important steps have been taken towards dealing with weaker areas, although in most respects, these have not yet had enough impact to raise the school's performance from satisfactory to good.

The involvement of subject leaders in developing and monitoring their areas and their understanding of their roles, have significantly improved since the last inspection, when they were inadequate. The school is aware that this is not yet fully consistent, mainly due to less experienced staff still needing to fully develop their expertise. Training to help them in carrying out their roles is due to take place early next term. Governors provide satisfactory support and guidance. They are well led, with a determination to improve their contribution further and a clear understanding of how this can be done. Reorganisation of their responsibilities has been too recent to have yet had an impact however.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3
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	3

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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit. We decided that yours is a satisfactory school. It is good at some things, but could be better at others.

The adults care well for you. Lots of you told us that you feel safe and happy. You help by being kind and considerate to each other. You also help by being well behaved and very willing to join in. Well done, especially, for how well you do in sports competitions, where you often beat much bigger schools. A few years ago, many pupils took too much time off school, so that it was difficult for them to make good progress in their learning. Well done to the staff for working hard to improve this and to you and your parents and the other grown ups at home for improving attendance to give you the best chance of doing well.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some of you told us that you like the way teachers work hard to make lessons interesting. Some lessons are really good, but others are not as good. Teachers need to have more chances to share their ideas on what works best, so that all lessons can be as good as the best. Some teachers give you really good tips on how to make your work better, but not all do, so this is another thing they need to share better. The teachers have worked hard to improve the way they teach writing and mathematics. We could see how this is already helping those of you in Years 1, 2 and 3 to make good progress. Although those of you in the others years make satisfactory progress, the staff know they can help you to make this even better. I know that they are going to work hard to make sure this happens. The headteacher and staff have managed to make some things better and mainly know what they still need to do.

Very best wishes for a happy and successful future to you all.

George Rayner

Lead Inspector