



Laburnum Grove Junior School, Bognor Regis

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125873
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293387
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Laburnum Grove
School category	Community		Bognor Regis
Age range of pupils	7–11		PO22 9HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01243 822885
Number on roll (school)	195	Fax number	01243 841586
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Julia Young
		Headteacher	Philippa Otton
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of high social deprivation. Attainment on entry is below average and the school has more pupils than average with significant learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Laburnum Grove is a satisfactory school with several good aspects to its work. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior management are aware of the need to sharpen their use of assessment data in order to track individual pupils' progress more effectively and improve the speed with which intervention strategies, such as those designed to address the underachievement of girls, are employed. Governors are supportive of the school's work and are well aware of the challenges that it faces. The school works well in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school, one writing, 'I am so pleased that I sent my son to Laburnum.'

The significantly high level of pupils with special educational needs in the current Years 3, 4 and 5 classes demonstrates clearly that levels of attainment on entry to the school are below average. By the time pupils leave the school at age 11 standards are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, too few pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics and science because they have limited opportunities for independent investigations in either of these subjects. This limits the level of achievement of higher attaining pupils, particularly girls. Standards in reading are a little higher because in this subject more pupils attain above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support, which helps them to achieve well. The standards achieved ensure pupils develop satisfactory skills that will contribute to their future well-being.

Personal development is good and pupils learn how to be safe and healthy and take responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by the average levels of attendance, and they make a good contribution to the local community. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve the curriculum since the last inspection but recognises it has more to do, in particular to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn independently. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Strategies designed to improve reading have been effective and the teaching of reading is good. The school provides a satisfactory level of care, support and guidance. The level of pastoral support is good. There is a strong ethos of inclusion underpinned by the provision of a wide range of support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of their own learning but although they are given individual targets, these are not yet making enough impact on improving pupils' levels of achievement because pupils themselves do not always understand them well enough.

Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school has a satisfactory capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take more steps to improve girls' attainment.
- Improve provision for independent practical investigations in science and mathematics.

- Improve systems for systematically tracking pupils' progress.
- Ensure that all pupils have a better understanding of their own targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils reach broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily. The high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs, both learning needs and behavioural difficulties, makes a significant impact on the overall levels of attainment. Standards in the national tests in 2006 were in line with national averages in reading, representing a good level of achievement. In mathematics and science, although standards were broadly average, the number of pupils achieving higher levels was below average. Whilst many pupils are achieving well, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve particularly well; for example, the higher attainers, and in particular higher attaining girls, generally are not yet achieving their full potential in mathematics and science and consequently achievement overall is less than it might be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships in the school are positive and pupils enjoy coming to school and participating in the wide range of opportunities offered. The school has welcomed several pupils with significant behavioural and emotional difficulties who have been excluded from other schools. Despite this, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of pupils excluded from school. Teachers use good behaviour strategies, which help pupils have good attitudes to each other and their work. Pupils talked of other pupils being generally kind to each other and particularly helpful to new pupils when they join the school. Although there were some negative comments from parents about the standards of behaviour in school, the inspection found that behaviour generally is good and when instances of inappropriate behaviour occur they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has good procedures in place. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. The school council is well established and has an important influence on some of the decisions that the teachers make. Bearing in mind pupils' broadly average basic skills and also how they are developing into independent individuals, they are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are good relationships between pupils and staff. Teachers' explanations and demonstrations are clear and promote learning well. They are particularly skilful in using interactive whiteboards to enhance pupils' learning. Work is planned satisfactorily to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because work is planned to meet their needs and good support is provided by skilled teaching assistants. However, not enough account is taken of the needs of higher attaining pupils, particularly girls. Reading is taught well and all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are achieving well in reading. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to investigate and record their findings in mathematics and science. Pupils are beginning to be involved in their learning by being encouraged to assess their own progress using a system of 'traffic light' symbols. A number of lessons were seen where pupils evaluated their own understanding and progress towards the lesson objectives during the lesson and this was helpful in encouraging them to keep going.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection and all subjects are now covered in sufficient depth. The school has rightly focused on improving pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement, particularly evident in the improvements in reading. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, pupils have used their literacy skills to good effect in a history topic on the Second World War. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to investigate in mathematics and science, however, and this prevents them doing better and reaching higher standards. The curriculum is well supported with a good range of enrichment activities. A good variety of clubs: choir, tag rugby and mathematics, for example, and regular visits and visitors, help pupils to develop their particular interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers and teaching assistants play a major part in developing pupils' emotional well-being. This helps pupils build their self-confidence and self-esteem and fosters their readiness to learn. The procedures to protect children are clear and secure. Good support is given to pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and they make good progress towards their targets. Teachers give good guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work through marking. Pupils are beginning to take some responsibility for their own learning by checking on what they do well and what they need to improve. However, although the school is collecting a considerable amount of data on pupils' attainment, it is not using the information well enough to track the

progress of individual pupils or to identify when intervention is needed to overcome any weaknesses and prevent pupils falling further behind.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher sets a clear educational direction for the school. This, in combination with the good teamwork, results in a positive and constructive learning atmosphere that is beginning to raise pupils' achievement. Staff successfully promote the well-being of all pupils, and the effective use of external expertise contributes further to pupils' learning. The school is beginning to use data appropriately to check on its own performance and this is helping the school to get to know itself better. For example, entry assessment of all new pupils is now undertaken and this provides the school with a secure baseline from which to monitor and assess pupils' progress. The results of the Year 6 national tests are also analysed in detail so the school has a good picture of pupils' achievement at the end of their time in the school. However, the school is not making the best use of the significant amount of annual data it has available about pupils' achievement in English and mathematics to carefully and systematically track individual pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result intervention strategies are not always employed rapidly enough. For example, the school was slow to respond to the underachievement of higher attaining girls and the belatedly introduced strategies have yet to have any measurable impact.

Although the great majority of parents are satisfied with the school, a significant minority have some concerns about the effectiveness of the school's links with parents. The inspection team found that the school could do more to reach out to parents and involve them more fully in their children's education. Overall, however, the shared sense of purpose and commitment amongst staff and governors, and the satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	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	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

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Laburnum Grove Junior School is a satisfactory school. Your headteacher and staff enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

We have asked your school to do some things to make it even better:

- Give you more chances to do your own investigations in mathematics and science.
- Ensure you all understand your targets and know what you can do to reach them.
- Make better use of the information the school has about your work to improve your progress.
- Make sure that the girls do as well as the boys.

We are confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further.

I wish you well in your future education.