

William Penn School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126002
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293430
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret King-Tours
Headteacher	Ashley Holt
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Brooks Green Road Coolham Horsham RH13 8GR
Telephone number	01403 741274
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The school was inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

William Penn is a small village school, with a Quaker foundation, where pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The number of pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties is well below average. The school is currently managed by an acting headteacher as the substantive headteacher is absent owing to ill health. Up until the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher was supported by the assistant headteacher and she has now left the school for maternity leave. The school is currently receiving additional support from the local authority through the work of a consultant headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. The positive attitude and excellent behaviour of the pupils demonstrate a mature approach to school life and they work hard at doing what their teachers ask of them. They enjoy school, and know how to keep safe and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are active in contributing very well to the life of the school and the community. However, approximately one in five parents rightly have concerns about the school.

Management of the school is at best fragile, with no permanent leaders in post, no effective coordination of subjects and no robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. This has led to a lack of cohesive long-term planning. The requirement to invest in the leadership team has impacted on the funds available for school development projects. The acting headteacher is leading the school well. He has secured the confidence of staff, governors and parents, but because of his short period at the school has not had the time to bring about significant improvement. The school has inadequate capacity for improvement.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils enter the school with standards well above those expected for their age and many are performing at well-above-average levels by the time they start Key Stage 1. Traditionally, standards have been well above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. They were exceptionally high at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006. However, there was a significant fall in Year 6 standards in 2006. Pupils did not meet the targets that had been set and, because assessment information is not robust, it is unclear about whether targets will be met this year. Pupils' progress over time across the school is inadequate because they are not achieving the high standards they should by the time they leave Year 6. The school has not tracked the progress of pupils well enough and there is uncertainty about how well pupils are doing.

Teaching and learning are inadequate largely as a result of weak teaching in the past and its subsequent effect on pupils' progress. Current teaching is mainly satisfactory with some pockets of good practice. This, though, is inconsistent. The pupils' work from Year 6 demonstrates that these pupils have received some good teaching this year. Teachers plan lessons but the delivery is not matched to the different ages and abilities of the pupils. The majority of staff are new to the school in the last two years and some are inexperienced. The impact of the support given to the Foundation Stage has been inconsistent, in part due to the turnover of staff. This has led to provision being inadequate.

The curriculum is satisfactory, although it lacks the excitement and challenge that these able and articulate pupils require. Care, guidance and support are inadequate. While low-achieving pupils and those with learning difficulties are appropriately supported, the more able are not sufficiently challenged. The school has not updated its safeguarding procedures to take account of the temporary leadership structure, although the school recognises that this is a matter of urgency and already has plans to deal with it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish a secure leadership team which can work together effectively to bring about improvement and ensure all pupils receive consistently good teaching.
- Create a rich and exciting curriculum which matches the high abilities of the majority of children.
- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage by challenging the children to think and make choices for themselves.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are in place.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are above average overall and are high in Year 2. At Key Stage 1, pupils performed particularly well in writing and mathematics tests in 2006. The few low-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress. In the national tests for Key Stage 2, standards in 2006 were the lowest they have been for five years.

Most pupils work hard in class and complete the work set for them. However, progress is inadequate across the school because pupils already start the school with very good ability and positive attitudes to learning. Deprivation is low and most children are supported well at home. There are few reasons why pupils should not achieve highly, given their aptitude and ability.

There was a significant dip in standards in 2006 for Key Stage 2 pupils, particularly in mathematics, although it is evident across all subjects. Targets were not achieved for average or above-average pupils. The targets for 2007 are based on more up-to-date but fragile assessments that do not always match the performance in tests, so the school is unclear about how well pupils are achieving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal, spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a growing knowledge of different faiths and cultures and some limited understanding of the wider world through their charity fundraising. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are actively involved in helping their school to improve through their contribution to the community and their work with the school council. Their views are listened to and taken seriously. Their preparation for future life is good as most have a good level of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall, although there was some good teaching seen in some classes and pupils' work shows that there has been some good teaching more recently in the school. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years, including changes to the senior management. Class teachers are relatively inexperienced. They have not always had the good support they need to develop their own skills. Lesson planning, while reflecting the work of the medium-term plans, does not always take account of the different abilities in the

class. There are weaknesses in some teachers' subject knowledge, for example, in the Foundation Stage. Teachers do not make enough use of computers to enhance the curriculum, although some of the work reflects that pupils have good ICT skills

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is enriched by extra-curricular activities, visits outside the school and by specialist teaching. All classes follow the broad outline of the same topic across the school and plan to make it relevant for the age group they teach. However, practice seldom reflects this ideal and there is a lack of exciting and challenging work going on around the school. Too many pupils are engaged in low-key activities and not enough attention is given to meeting the needs of the pupils, particularly those with high ability. However, to their credit, the pupils quietly get on with the work asked of them and commented that they would like harder work once they have finished set exercises.

The curriculum is inadequate for the Foundation Stage. In the youngest class, the majority of the pupils are in the Reception Year yet their lessons are formal and do not allow enough time for independent learning and investigation. Activities are set out for them to choose where they want to work, and they have good access to an outside area to extend their environment. However, opportunities are not taken to engage the children in meaningful play activities which would develop their high abilities and challenge their thinking.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The quality of care, guidance and support is inadequate overall. Pupils are well cared for and respond well to the guidance and support they get. The school has started to put in place some assessment procedures so that pupils' progress can be checked more robustly, but this is untested. Monitoring of pupils' progress and evaluation of standards has not been systematically carried out until this year. As a consequence, the setting of targets is not based on reliable and tested data and the school is unclear about why standards fell in 2006. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory and teaching assistants work well alongside children in the classrooms. There is no named child protection officer and staff have not received up-to-date training.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because there is too much uncertainty over the management of the school. The school is not providing value for money as the pupils are not making the progress that they should be.

The school is currently being led well by the acting headteacher, although he has been at the school too short a time to have had significant impact. There has been some initial monitoring of teaching and learning but senior management remains uncertain about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and the grading of teaching has been too generous. The self-evaluation was too ambitious in its estimations that the school had begun to improve.

The governing body support the school adequately and are actively working aware of the weaknesses in leadership and management to bring about improvement. Members of staff are more confident and morale has improved under the leadership of the acting headteacher. The majority of parents are happier about the school, saying that communication has improved since the arrival of the acting headteacher. The coordination of special education needs is satisfactory and pupils get appropriate support to meet their needs. The school is weak in the coordination of core subjects. There is currently no science coordinator and teachers are new to the roles of coordinating mathematics and English. The mentoring and support for newly qualified teachers is currently unsatisfactory.

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

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	4
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?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

William Penn School, Coolham, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 8QN

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school a few weeks ago. I enjoyed watching you at work and talking to a number of you at break, lunch and in class.

I was most impressed with how well behaved you were and how well you get on with each other. Your good attitudes to work, how well you listen in class and your willingness to do the best you can is something you should be very proud of. You are a credit to the school and your parents. Your hard work and good attitudes are why you have done so well in your test results.

Unfortunately, I don't think your school is doing as well as it should. This is because although you work hard and get good standards in your tests, I know that many of you are not doing as well as you should be. Your school is going through a difficult time and there have been many changes to the teaching staff. Your parents have been very concerned on your behalf and many wrote to me about the school. They were right to do that and, as a result, I have asked that your school gets more help to make it good again. The jobs it needs to do are to:

- establish a good management team for the school so that improvements can be made.
- improve the quality of the teaching so that the work you do in class is more challenging and exciting to those of you who could do better.
- make better provision for the youngest children in the school, and
- ensure that all of you are protected and as safe as you can be.

We are going to ask some other inspectors to come back to the school and see how well you are getting on. I know all of you will do your hardest to ensure your school gets better quickly. Continuing your good behaviour and attitudes will help the teachers work on the things they need to do and I know some of you will come up with some good suggestions through your school council. Some of this has already started with the arrival of your new acting headteacher.

I wish you all the best of luck for the future.

Linda Kelsey HMI