



Warren Dell Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117169
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 294579
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Best

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gosforth Lane
School category	Community		South Oxhey, South Oxhey
Age range of pupils	3–11		Watford, Hertfordshire
			WD19 7UZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 4284571
Number on roll (school)	182	Fax number	0208 4214160
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Ms Jacqueline Treacy
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	10–11 January 2007	294579

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves an established estate of privately owned and rented homes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. When they start in the Nursery, most children's skills and experiences are lower than those of a similar age.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is higher than in most other schools. The proportions of pupils whose home language is not English or who are from minority ethnic groups are below national averages.

There has been a high turnover of teaching staff in recent years. The headteacher and three teachers started in September 2006. The school has recently achieved the Healthy School accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school which has resolved the inadequacies identified in the previous inspection. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The governors, headteacher and staff are successfully building upon the improvements made in response to the action plan devised with, and supported by, the local authority. Much of what is currently in place was introduced quite recently, but rising standards reflect the impact of good and improving practice. Through her incisive leadership, the headteacher has gained the respect and trust of pupils, parents, staff and governors. The hard-working and committed staff team enthusiastically share her clear vision for the school's development. The school's capacity for further improvement is good because regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, which involves all staff and the governing body, are helping leaders take effective action. The school rightly judges that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory because they are making more consistent progress as they move through the school. The standards and quality in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of children are on track to meet the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. However, many pupils, including those with the potential to reach the higher levels, lack confidence in using and applying their skills, knowledge and understanding in different contexts and this limits the progress that some pupils make. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those speaking English as an additional language, make similar progress to others. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, and is now satisfactory. Teachers' expectations are good and planning gives priority to meeting pupils' differing needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their enjoyment of school is good and their attendance, although still below average, is improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Through the school council, pupils make a good contribution to the community. They know how to protect themselves from dangers and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' development of key skills to promote their future learning and preparation for work is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in different situations. In the Foundation Stage, children do not have enough opportunities to use the outside area. The school's provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory. Effective systems for tracking pupils' progress are starting to provide teachers with accurate information to help them support pupils' learning. Most pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. However, existing procedures for identifying the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties

are not rigorous enough, and they and their parents or carers are not sufficiently involved in the process.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the curriculum.
- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage, particularly by making better use of the outdoor facilities.
- Improve the rigour with which pupils with learning difficulties are identified, and involve them and parents or carers more actively in setting and reaching challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When the current Year 1 pupils started the school year, most were close to the expected levels for children at the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. This represents an improvement on standards in earlier years and indicates that specialist support in the Foundation Stage is boosting children's progress in the Reception class.

Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in the summer of 2006 were broadly average although standards in writing lagged somewhat behind other core subjects. This continued the upward trend in results from the very low point of 2003. Compared with the previous year, the proportion of pupils reaching the national average improved but fewer reached the higher levels. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall.

Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were below average but pupils made satisfactory progress from their low starting points in Year 3. Although the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels exceeded the school's targets, fewer pupils than expected reached the national averages in mathematics and science. In English the target was broadly met.

In both key stages, pupils with learning difficulties, pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those speaking English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils appreciate the help and support they get from staff. They say: 'Teachers help me to feel good about myself.' Pupils are developing a keen sense of right and wrong. They generally work well together to discuss ideas. Firm but unobtrusive supervision at break times and around school promotes pupils' social development effectively. Pupils willingly carry out responsibilities. Most respond positively to the school's 'five golden rules' for behaviour, which they have helped to develop. However, a small minority still finds difficulty in maintaining self-control. There have been four fixed period exclusions in the current reporting period. The school council helps pupils to

make positive contributions to their school as a community and their suggestions, such as zoning the playground for different activities, have been taken seriously. Absence rates remain above the national average but the school has a good range of effective strategies that are improving attendance and punctuality.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence confirms the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory. The proportion of good lessons is rising, and with it the standards pupils attain. Teachers' improving use of assessment information is helping them to plan more challenging and interesting lessons for their pupils. For example, numeracy lessons regularly end with a problem-solving challenge and the 'big writing' project is helping to capture pupils' imagination and improve the quality of their writing. Teachers clearly identify in their plans what they expect pupils to learn, and share these targets at the start of each lesson. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Most try hard when working independently and in small groups. However, where teachers are unable to maintain the concentration of a small minority, this can slow the pace of learning for the whole class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school's increased emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills is well founded on pupils' needs. The personal, social and health education programme is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory; staff make good use of role play to develop children's language skills but the outdoor learning area is not used enough. The school makes satisfactory provision for after-school clubs and visits to enrich pupils' learning. All pupils benefit from learning in a well equipped, stimulating environment with plenty of space for practical work. The library provides a good range of attractively displayed books.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for safeguarding children are satisfactory. Risk assessments are thorough and all staff are aware of their responsibility to ensure high levels of health and safety. Pupils and staff get on well. Pupils say: 'The staff are here to support us - and they do.' Staff give satisfactory guidance. They make helpful comments in lessons and when marking pupils' books so that most pupils understand how to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties receive sound support but they and their parents or carers are not sufficiently involved in setting and meeting personal targets. Links with outside agencies are good overall and the school has satisfactory links with its partner schools. Parents find the staff approachable and appreciate them coming out onto

the playground to talk. One parent says: 'The school has improved dramatically since the last inspection.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are currently satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has a very clear view of what needs to be done but many of her well-conceived improvement measures are still being embedded and yet to impact fully on standards and quality. In conjunction with the local authority, the headteacher has set challenging targets to achieve by the end of this school year and effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements are helping to steer the school towards them. The school's capacity to improve is good because subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles and responsibilities, are fully involved in this robust evaluation.

The governing body is well led, meets its statutory obligations and is supportive of the school. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and, through training, are satisfactorily developing their role as the school's 'critical friends'. The arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are satisfactory. The school is adequately staffed but faces many challenges in attracting and retaining high calibre staff, which impacts on the schools rate of improvement.

Day-to-day routines are effectively managed and the well-maintained school runs smoothly. The school makes sound use of its resources and has suitable plans for the use of its budget surplus.

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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	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?	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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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	2
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	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

15 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Warren Dell Primary School, Gosforth Lane, South Oxhey, Watford Hertfordshire WD19 7UZ

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and listening to all the things you had to tell us. We are delighted to see how much the school has improved since the inspection just over a year ago. Everyone has worked hard to achieve this and we congratulate you. The standard of your work is higher due to much better teaching. We particularly like the way in which you get involved in lessons through discussions and working in groups. Your teachers have a much better idea of how well you are doing and tell you what you need to do to improve your work. Your efforts are paying off - we really enjoyed reading your 'big writing' stories and watching you solve numeracy problems. We are pleased to hear how much you enjoy coming to school and that the staff are really helpful to you. You are having fewer days off school and you have worked hard to gain the Healthy Schools award - well done!

Ms Treacy and the staff have worked hard to build upon the improvements in the last school year. Many of the changes made are still quite new but we can see that these are working. We are asking them to do three things in particular to help you improve the school further. Firstly, we want children in the Nursery and Reception classes to use the outside area more in their lessons. Secondly, we are asking your teachers to help you make better use of what you learn, for example, using your numeracy skills to solve problems, and using your writing skills in geography. Thirdly, we think that those of you with learning difficulties could have better targets - and we want you and your parents or carers to be more involved in setting and meeting these.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Mike Best

Lead inspector