

Pickhurst Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101598
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307751
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hayley Kembey
Headteacher	Mrs Leonie Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Pickhurst Lane West Wickham BR4 0HL
Telephone number	020 8462 3196
Fax number	020 8462 4640

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' achievement, the quality of the school's provision for mathematics, strategies for improving attendance and the impact on learning of aspects of the school accommodation. In addition, evidence was gathered from discussions and school documentation to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

Pickhurst is an above average size infant school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average - as is the number with English as an additional language. The children on entry come from 24 different pre-school settings.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pickhurst Infants is an outstanding school. One parent summed up the views of almost all by saying, 'We have been absolutely thrilled with the education our son has received at Pickhurst. Staff are friendly, caring and a really strong ethos of learning exists in the school.' The highly effective staff team, led by the outstanding headteacher, are responsible for the school's consistent success in providing high quality education. Each year the national test results show the pupils to be achieving outstandingly well. Behind these impressive results are excellent teaching and the outstanding care and guidance that enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make substantial gains in their learning.

When children start school, their skills and understanding are generally in line with those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made excellent progress and achieved very well and standards are above those expected for children of their age. National assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that standards have never been less than well above average in the last five years. In 2007, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected levels in writing, reading, mathematics and science was exceptionally high, as was the number achieving the higher Level 3. All pupils, whatever their ability, achieve outstandingly well. The school's provision for those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is exceptional, and as a result they make excellent progress.

Pupils develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. They respond with great enthusiasm to all the school offers and are attentive and hard working. Even the youngest children have a strong awareness of the part they play in the school and beyond. One boy, independently, wrote to the local council expressing his concern over recycling issues and the school's dumping of coloured paper. Another explained with great passion the reason for their introduction of 'Friendship Benches' and how important is it for no one 'to feel lonely'. The school has very thorough procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy, and they also have a good awareness of how to eat and live healthily. They are eager participants in all of the school's physical activities. The views of almost all parents about these aspects were summed up by one who wrote, 'The school actively encourages exercise and healthy eating. They provide many extra-curricular activities and many events e.g. theatre productions, dance week and sports week. The children are encouraged to express themselves and are full of confidence.' Behaviour is exemplary and the pupils say that if they have a problem they feel that the adults working with them will sort it out. The school's excellent systems have also raised attendance levels so that they are now satisfactory, and constantly improving. The pupils' high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, excellent relationships and skills in working together prepare them excellently for the next stage of their education.

Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and they are set challenging, individual, learning targets. There are very good systems to check their on-going progress towards these. This is backed up by the care taken over transition to the junior school, which is extremely thorough. In particular, the joint approach with the local junior school, led by the mathematics leader, has proved to be especially beneficial. The rich curriculum covers all subjects very well and is enhanced by a very good range of activities in the outstanding outdoor classrooms. The motivation of Year 1 pupils is enhanced through the use of their 'stuffed animals' and is outstanding. As one boy explained he really likes the tortoise and keeps on going, but it is the unicorn he likes best as it helps him to use his imagination better. Although the staff provide countless opportunities for individual pupils to shine, they are continuing to

refine the curriculum to ensure the individual talents of each member of staff are used to the best effect and lessons continue to be as exciting and relevant as they can make them.

The impact of the outstanding leadership at all levels is seen in the excellent progress made by the pupils. The headteacher and senior managers work exceptionally well in partnership with each other and all respond eagerly to new initiatives and responsibility. As one parent wrote, 'Overall we think the school is outstanding, happy and joyful. The headmistress is most impressive, combining authority with a tender, loving, demeanour.' The foundations of the school's success lie in the staff's commitment in following this exemplary lead to meet the needs of all. The school has an excellent track record of achieving high standards that has been maintained through constantly seeking to improve. The excellent governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. The wide range of skills they bring to their work is currently focusing on the problem of the poor quality and state of repair of the Year 2 mobile classrooms. All those involved with the school have this determination not to rest on their laurels and the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes. The huge level of commitment and care shown by all Foundation Stage staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well and immediately begin to learn. As one parent wrote, 'The settling in process of new reception children is excellent, ensuring children feel safe and secure and allowing them to move forward at their own pace.' Staff work especially hard to give the children a real sense of determining their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in their language and social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children, as they put together their 'Jungle Rap', performed their 'magic' in their circus, or painted their elephants, was spellbinding. The classrooms are all stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one to another. The outstanding outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more capable children. Staff get to know the children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well.

What the school should do to improve further

Although there are no major issues for improvement, the inspector agrees with the school that it should

- further refine the curriculum to make sure that the interests and talents of all staff are used to optimum effect to make all lessons as exciting as possible.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

4 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pickhurst Infant School, West Wickham, BR4 0HL

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school and talking to me about your feelings, ambitions and thoughts. It was a delight to meet you and I really enjoyed looking at your work and joining in your lessons.

I am glad to tell you that I think your school is outstanding and provides you with a really good start to your education. I was particularly pleased with these things:

- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school and looking after you.
- You all really enjoy being in school
- You are all making excellent progress with your work
- You behave very well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers - all of this helps you to succeed
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

Your teachers and support staff work hard to help you to do as well as you can. I have asked them to keep working on planning the curriculum to make sure that they all use what they are best at and make your lessons as exciting as they possibly can be.

I wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at Pickhurst Infant School.

David Marshall

Lead inspector