

Weald First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102215
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	307935
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Holroyd
Headteacher	Miss Sue Jones
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Robin Hood Drive Harrow Weald Harrow HA3 7DH
Telephone number	020 8954 4531
Fax number	020 8385 7546

Age group	3–8
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Inspection number	307935

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school with pupils from diverse backgrounds. Many pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal admission time. A high number of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and many pupils' first language is not English. A growing number of pupils are on the early stages of learning English. A high proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has gained Arts Mark Gold, National Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Weald First is a good school where pupils flourish and mature within a supportive and caring learning environment. The school is effective in overcoming potential barriers to learning, such as the high number of pupils learning English as a new language, and the many pupils who join and leave the school outside normal times. Good support and guidance systems ensure that all pupils have equal chances to succeed. Pupils start with a low level of basic skills but achieve well due to good teaching and learning allied to a good curriculum. The well-planned curriculum is enriched with a wide range of clubs and activities. One parent wrote, 'The staff are committed to providing quality learning experiences'.

Pupils exceed nationally expected levels for their age particularly in writing by the end of Year 2. Standards in mathematics are average in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1. The school leaders have identified the need to improve pupils' problem solving skills for raising standards in mathematics. Good progress is maintained well into Year 3. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well, because their needs are carefully identified and extra support effectively organised to meet their needs. Pupils learning English as a new language, perform in line with their peers. Teachers and the teaching assistants effectively and sensitively adapt their methods to support the needs of the bilingual pupils.

Teaching is good across the school. Pupils respond well to the variety of well-planned and interesting activities in lessons. Teachers track pupils' progress effectively and set appropriate targets for improvement. However, not all teachers review these consistently, or involve pupils fully in assessing their own learning in order for them to gain an understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are extremely happy, well behaved and very hardworking. This has a positive impact on their academic progress. The good provision for welfare, health and safety ensures that pupils fully understand how to lead healthy lives, keep safe and avoid danger. Their well-developed teamwork skills and a secure grounding in the basic skills stand them in good stead for their future education.

The good leadership of the school is clearly focused on raising standards through continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. Members of the senior management team are effective in setting a high standard in terms of their own classroom practice. The headteacher, staff and governors know the school well through their good evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and their capacity to improve still further is good. Governors play an important role and keep in close touch with the developments. Although the school has difficulty in recruiting and retaining governors effective steps are being taken to fill the current vacancies.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle well and make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they meet most of the goals expected for their age. The stimulating environment both indoors and outdoor, and well-planned activities, build firm foundations for their future learning and personal development. Teachers' planning includes focused activities where speaking and listening are actively encouraged. In an observed lesson, children talked interestingly about their hats for the Easter Parade. There is generally a good balance of teacher directed and children's own play activities. Whilst there is a planned approach to monitoring what children do, a few are

sometimes left to their own devices and do not sustain learning as a result. Teachers' records provide a coherent picture of each child's development over time. A well-organised and skilfully taught programme of letter sounds in the Reception classes is proving highly successful in supporting children's language skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Year 3.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, by regularly reviewing pupils' targets and involving them in assessing their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills in line with those expected for their age. In the past four years, although the results have fluctuated a little, pupils achieved well and maintained average standards by the end of Year 2. In the national tests of 2007, the results have improved greatly, to above the national average in reading and writing. The results in mathematics although close to average, lag slightly behind. Good standards are well maintained into Year 3 where pupils continue to make good progress. The overall results clearly mark a significant improvement in writing and this is mainly due to more focused support in reading and writing. A small number of boys show less than expected progress, particularly in writing. The staff are aware of this and are taking appropriate action to address it. The focus on improving pupils' mathematics skills of problem solving across the school is a current priority. Pupils of all abilities, including those new to learning English, and the gifted and talented, achieve well, because their needs are carefully identified and provided for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. The school is a harmonious community where diversity is celebrated and respected. Attendance is satisfactory and improved this year because pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and the school is quick to follow up any absences. Most pupils' behaviour is good and this creates the calm and purposeful atmosphere in school. Pupils show a clear understanding of the need to lead a healthy life-style, particularly relating to exercise and food. They feel safe in school and know who to go to if they are worried. Pupils develop a keen sense of responsibility for others through roles such as the playground friends and reading buddies. They have significant influence on school life through the school council; for example, they designed the school playground and worked on the travel plan. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by supporting a range of charities. Year 3 pupils organised the parents' strawberry tea party and collected funds for a cancer charity. Pupils' acquisition of good basic skills and their well-developed teamwork skills, is laying good grounds for their life in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Although the majority of teaching is good, the quality does vary. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and the pace of work is good, which means that pupils learn quickly. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable, and planned well to meet pupils' individual needs. The teaching assistants provide effective extra support for those who need it. Relationships are strong and pupils are well motivated to work hard as a result. Good use is made of the digital cameras to celebrate pupils' work. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and talk about their learning, which helps their understanding. In a Year 2 lesson, the very good opportunities provided for speaking and listening were readily taken as pupils described their experiences and answered challenging questions posed by their peers. In the less effective lessons, the pace of learning is sometimes slow and teachers' subject knowledge less secure. In some lessons, well-planned opportunities for peer and self-evaluation are sometimes missed. Consequently pupils are not always sure about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. Their personal development is promoted well, as are their basic skills in several subjects. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through drama and role-play. The curriculum is well planned to match pupils' needs and aptitudes. Good links are made between subjects and pupils' use of their literacy and numeracy skills is well promoted. The enrichment weeks, such as the World Maths Week and International Week are well enjoyed and successful. A good range of popular clubs such as Huff and Puff, Website and multi-sports, further enhance pupils' personal and creative skills. There are a few interactive whiteboards suitably used to further pupils' learning. The school is working towards improving this provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well. All safety requirements are securely met. Racial harmony is strong and pupils play together happily and safely. The staff know their pupils very well and monitor their progress carefully to ensure they improve. Induction procedures ensure that children new to the school, particularly those on early stages of learning English, settle quickly and are ready to learn. Learning mentors, a play therapist and the counsellors provide effective support to vulnerable pupils. 'I have exceptional ladies caring for my daughters', commented one parent. Although pupils have targets set for them, these need to be updated on a more regular basis and discussed with them in order to help them to improve their learning. The school has good links with outside agencies to support vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, for example, the Speech and Language Therapy team. Good links are maintained with the middle school as children move into the next phase of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership and her clear vision for the school is reflected in the common sense of purpose among staff and particularly within the management team. There is a regular programme of classroom observations and staff training has focused on key whole school issues such as the achievement of boys and planning to meet all pupils' needs. The school challenges itself by seeking, and achieving, major national quality standards such as the Primary Quality Mark and the International Schools Award. The schools self-evaluation is accurate and identifies for example, the need to improve standards in mathematics. The school is also working to improve an overall view of the progress that pupils make in each subject and each class. Resources are well managed and used to support learning, for example teaching assistants are well deployed and equipment for information, communication technology is being steadily improved. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. It provides satisfactory support and challenges the school with good leadership from the chair of governors. A number of governors are new to their positions and they are receiving training to assist them in developing their roles.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

02 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weald First School, Harrow, HA3 7DH

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work. Your school is much liked by you and your parents.

We think your school is good. Here are the reasons why:

- you really enjoy coming to school
- you make good progress because your lessons are good
- you enjoy the good extra-curricular activities available for you
- your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other and teachers
- you listen carefully to your teachers and you are willing to work hard
- you learn to work and play well together and to look after yourselves
- everyone at school takes good care of you, so that you are safe and happy.

Your headteacher, class teachers, and all of the other staff who help run your school, are keen for you to get the best education.

There are two things that we think would make your school even better.

- We have asked the headteacher, governors and all staff to work even harder at improving mathematics in school, so that you can get to much higher standards just as you do in reading and writing, and I am sure you will rise to this challenge!
- We have also asked your school to ensure that all the teaching is good and that you are involved much more in finding out how well you are learning, and what more you can do to be even better at your work.

Everyone at Weald First School can work together to do these things. We hope that you will continue to enjoy all the things you do, which help you to learn and be happy.

With best wishes

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector