

Wooden Hill Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109922
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	310142
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Barnard Payne

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	368
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Riddaway
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Staplehurst Bracknell RG12 8DB
Telephone number	01344 421117

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Inspection number	310142

Fax number

01344 305952

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	31 March -1 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending this larger-than-average primary school are from White British backgrounds; there are small numbers from several other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in many other schools; of these, the great majority have difficulties with speech, language and communication, and a smaller group have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 46 children in the Nursery on a part-time basis and 53 in Reception. The school has gained the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wooden Hill is a satisfactory school. Pupils show satisfactory achievement given their starting points, but some pupils could make more progress, particularly the more able. The school fosters pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Parents and pupils value its positive ethos. Pupils say 'the school makes you feel welcome,' a view echoed by parents, one of whom writes, 'I have every confidence in the school and staff to provide a positive learning environment for my children.'

Children start school with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. When they leave at the age of 11, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. The school has accurately identified lower achievement in writing and mathematics as priorities for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to the effective support that they receive. The school is developing its use of assessment data to help track pupils' progress so that teachers can plan more effectively for all ability groups, but there is still work to do to make an impact on achievement. There is no formal method of assessing children's ability and progress when they join the Reception class.

Pupils say that 'teachers are really friendly' and their work with support staff to build good relationships leads to lessons that are fun and well managed. Pupils' progress shows that teaching is satisfactory. There is a good level of consistency in classroom management, of care and the engagement of pupils. In some lessons, planning focuses on what pupils are to do rather than what they are to learn, and this slows progress. Where teachers are clearer about what they want pupils to learn, and plan well for different levels of attainment, pupils make better progress.

Pupils develop good personal skills that will help them in their future lives. They show excellent development of the personal qualities that enable them to work effectively together, take on responsibilities and contribute to the community. They acquire good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The high take-up for physical activities, which form part of the wide range of enrichment activities the school provides, shows pupils' good levels of commitment to healthy lifestyles. While the school makes good provision for personal development, the curriculum is not consistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. A major curriculum review has led to improvements; it is the right course of action, but it has not yet led to a significant increase in achievement.

The school has experienced many staffing changes in recent years and the headteacher has successfully maintained the school's strong, caring ethos throughout this time. For this reason, the school is in a secure position to move forward. Leadership capacity in the school is developing, and staff show commitment to continuing improvement. Nevertheless, several key staff are relatively new to their roles, and the impact of their work is not yet showing in terms of rising achievement. They have made a good start, and the school has identified the key strategies to bring about further change and improvement. Governors share their commitment. Many new strategies have yet to come to fruition, but they are in place and the school shows a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and most reach the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. They make a good start in their personal development because there are plenty of opportunities for them to develop confidence and initiative. Children have a growing awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet. They move around safely and mix well. Adults talk to children about what they are doing and encourage them to experiment through an interesting range of tasks. There is a suitable balance between tasks children choose for themselves and those led by staff. Insufficient emphasis given to the development of writing and mathematical skills has slowed progress in these areas. The newly established programme for linking sounds to letters is beginning to benefit the development of literacy skills. The recently appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader plays a key role in looking after children's welfare. She has made a good start to developing individual records of achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of achievement data to accelerate progress in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers challenge all pupils to achieve as well as they can, particularly the more able.
- Improve assessment in the Reception class.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, and standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. There has been a gradual decline in attainment in writing and mathematics over the years, reflecting a changing intake and children joining the school with more difficulties in these subjects. A number of more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should in English and mathematics. The school has rightly identified increasing the proportion reaching higher levels in these subjects as an improvement priority. While achievement in science has been good in recent years, it has been much lower in mathematics. The school also identifies writing as an area to raise standards, as reading boosts the overall English scores. Pupils' books show that they are productive writers, and they use their literacy skills in a variety of contexts, but they do not have enough strategies to develop their writing independently. Pupils who have difficulties with speech, language and communication make good progress, because the school uses its assessments to deploy well-trained support staff to use a mixture of in-class, small-group and individual support. Those who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties make good progress, because staff have consistent expectations regarding behaviour and manage pupils well within a supportive environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes and the tolerance they show towards each other reflect good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show a willingness to learn about people from different cultures and backgrounds, which they do through their work in lessons and through fund-raising activities. Pupils enjoy the activities and talk with enthusiasm about school. The enthusiasm with which pupils participate in physical activities reflects the school's Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils show a good understanding of how to remain safe. They have a role in ensuring one another's safety, acting as peer mediators to help sort out problems and becoming playground leaders. They feel confident about speaking to staff about any difficulties. Pupils take on a variety of responsibilities and have an active school council and Eco Council. Their acquisition of skills that they will use later in their lives is good. The reason that this aspect of personal development is good and not outstanding is that pupils do not consistently make the progress that they could in English and mathematics, although they acquire a good level of ICT capability.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers use a variety of strategies to engage pupils, including good use of discussion and whole-class collaborative activities. For example, in an English lesson the class worked together to come up with riddles before devising their own. Teachers manage classes and activities well. They make effective use of teaching assistants to help pupils with learning difficulties. In some lessons, pupils all do the same activity without knowing how to take their work to a higher level. In these cases, the planning does not take enough account of the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly those who are more able. Teachers' use of shared success criteria, which helps pupils to understand what to aim for, is developing across the school and helping teachers to improve their practice. Teachers mostly mark work effectively so that pupils are clear about how well they have done and what to do next, but there is some inconsistency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their education, and the curriculum successfully promotes their personal development. A wide range of enrichment activities enables them to develop a variety of interests. There are good opportunities to take part in physical activities. There is satisfactory provision for literacy and numeracy. The school ensures good provision for ICT through weekly ICT lessons, in which pupils develop their capability in a variety of contexts. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school community. The planning for the more-able pupils is inconsistent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare. This ensures that pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, feel secure. Early identification of children who are at risk leads to effective intervention to keep them engaged in learning. The school

has established strong partnerships with outside professionals. The school has maintained attendance at the national level, working intensively with individuals to keep them coming to school. Its successful work in managing behaviour and other difficulties, using a range of support strategies, has ensured that the school is a positive environment that all pupils enjoy being in. Pupils' ability to raise concerns reflects a well-established awareness of health and safety issues. Pupils have personal targets, but not all teachers use them effectively to help them make progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has led and managed a series of initiatives to improve pupils' progress. These include a complete reorganisation of teaching strategies, a review of the curriculum, and a wider distribution of leadership roles. The school has used its self-evaluation systematically to identify these key improvement priorities and has involved a team of staff in this process. The school's leaders effectively promote the personal development and well-being of pupils. They have established a whole-school programme to make pupils reflect on how to learn best. The school has an informed understanding of its parents and local community, and develops pupils' wider understanding of faiths and cultures through its curriculum. Governors are committed to the school and know its strengths and the areas to develop; in common with the school's senior leadership, they recognise that the changes made recently have yet to have a full impact on raising standards.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wooden Hill Primary and Nursery School, Bracknell, RG12 8DB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. Wooden Hill is a very pleasant place to visit and we can see why you enjoy being there. You were very helpful and we really enjoyed seeing all the things you do, including your after-school clubs. You are learning skills now that will be very valuable later, such as how to take responsibility and work well together. The staff take good care of you all and make sure that you are happy and well supported. While the school is good at helping you develop your personal qualities, you could achieve more in English and mathematics. The progress you make is satisfactory, and that is why we have judged that the school is satisfactory overall.

You behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. In some lessons, you could do more if you had the opportunity. We found that you are able to do this best where the teacher is clear about what you could do to reach a higher standard. This encourages you to try to do more and extend your work. A good way to achieve this is for teachers to use their assessments of your work to plan challenging activities, particularly where you find work straightforward. We also found that teachers need a better way to assess the progress of children in Reception. We have set out the next steps the school should take so that it continues to improve. These are:

- to use the assessments of your work to help teachers plan lessons that will increase your progress in English and mathematics
- to ensure that teachers challenge all of you to achieve as well as you can, particularly when you find some activities easy and could do harder work
- to improve assessment in the Reception class.

You are learning how to be good learners through your work on Building Learning Power. Now is the opportunity to put this to the best use!

Yours faithfully

Barnard Payne

Lead Inspector