

The Laurance Haines Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117320
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312568
Inspection date	5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Pennie
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Ridyard
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Vicarage Road Watford Hertfordshire WD18 0DD
Telephone number	01923 233146
Fax number	01923 219296

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	5 February 2008
Inspection number	312568

© 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 one Additional Inspector who was in the school for one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following areas were inspected in detail: reasons for standards in mathematics and science being lower than in English, opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life, how well the curriculum is planned to meet the diverse range of cultural and language needs of pupils and the quality of academic guidance provided. Aspects of the quality of education, especially teaching and learning and the curriculum were also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

The inspector found evidence that the school's assessment of some areas of its work, as given in its self-evaluation, was modest, and the upgraded assessments have been included in this report where appropriate. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and pupils, the parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. About 70% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and in excess of 30 languages other than English are represented in the school. A well above average proportion is at an early stage of learning English. The school experiences high levels of pupil mobility and many join the school mid key stage with little or no English. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, with a particular weakness in English language skills. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is above average. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average, but the number with a statement of special educational need is about average. Awards achieved by the school include Basic Skills Quality Mark and Hertfordshire Activemark for provision in physical education. They are working towards achieving Healthy School status and an ICT (information and communication technology) Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which helps pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards from a low starting point. It provides good value for money. There is a very high proportion of pupils who start school, either at the beginning of the Foundation Stage or at other points throughout the school, with very little or no English. The school does extremely well to make sure that all become competent in using the English language as a tool to learn. Achievement in English is outstanding and there has been a significant improvement in progress and standards, which have been above average, over the last two years. However, the picture in mathematics and science is not as good with satisfactory achievement and broadly average standards. These weaknesses are linked to pupils' limited subject vocabulary and their understanding of questions written in English. The school has started to work on this and has noticed that as English skills get better, standards in mathematics particularly are showing signs of improvement. The school anticipates improved attainment at the end of Year 6 this year, and predicts sustained improvement in English and broadly average standards in mathematics. This is evident in pupils' books and in lessons. Pupils make steady good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Reception, attainment still falls short of the nationally expected levels, but a good foundation for learning has been laid. This is built on in both key stages, where pupils progress well.

This school has a very strong focus on providing for pupil's academic achievement and personal development. Consequently, the level of care and guidance shown for each individual is outstanding. Pupils appreciate the high levels of care and they feel valued. As a result, they show a lot of consideration for each other. For example, older pupils take on the role of infant carers, looking after younger pupils at lunch and other break times. So effective is this role that younger children say they would choose to tell an 'infant carer' if they have problems. Pupils are extremely happy in school because they feel safe, valued and listened to. Through the school council, pupils have a say in the way the school moves forward. They are currently looking at ways in which they can initiate improvements to the dining arrangements and the provision of healthy snacks, based on their good understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a significant contribution to life in school and to the local and wider communities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent moral behaviour is seen in the way pupils behave in and around school. At the beginning of the school year, pupils devise class rules in negotiation with the class teachers. Because they have ownership of the rules, they respond very well when reminded of the expectations they have of themselves. The school operates in a very smooth and calm way and, bearing in mind the very wide range of backgrounds and cultural differences, this demonstrates their excellent social and cultural development. When asked what they like about the school, one young pupil responded that she liked 'meeting and finding out about children from different backgrounds'. This reflects the high value the school places on diversity and shows the excellent levels of inclusion that is one of the cornerstones of the school's ethos.

The school provides excellent academic guidance for pupils. Targets are set for the next steps in pupils' learning and they are able to talk about them with clarity. They know why they have targets, the levels that they are at and what they have to do to get to the next level. The guidance provided is excellent because the school involves pupils in assessing their own and other pupils' work. Under the supervision of their teachers, pupils look at each other's work and identify what is good and what can be improved. This helps them recognise what makes a

good piece of work and what to aim for. This process is another of the aspects of the school pupils say they like.

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils at all levels of attainment to achieve well. Planning is good and teachers use assessment data well to match work to the individual needs of all pupils, often planning up to five different activities for individual and group work. This shows clearly that teachers have high expectations and good knowledge and understanding of how to match tasks to individual pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are well organised and knowledgeable. They make a significant contribution to pupils' progress by supporting individuals and groups with learning difficulties, and those who need extra support because they are in the early stages of learning English. The school is now working towards making teaching more effective in mathematics and science by developing pupils' problem solving skills and raising their awareness of language in these and other subjects. The curriculum is good. It interests pupils and meets their needs effectively by providing a strong emphasis on English language and communication skills. This clear focus provides pupils with a good preparation for their on-going education and future lives. It also makes a significant contribution to their spiritual and cultural development, for example, by the ways in which pupils are encouraged to consider the plights of people in war zones, both at the current time and throughout history.

The school's success is achieved through its leadership and management. It is good overall, but the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership. The headteacher is highly respected by staff and pupils alike. She knows the school extremely well and monitors its performance very carefully, holding teachers to account for their own effectiveness and their pupils' progress and personal development. The headteacher and deputy headteacher together have a secure understanding of assessment data and the deputy headteacher provides a strong role model and support for teaching staff. They are carefully supporting subject leaders and senior managers in further developing new aspects of their roles, including making a greater contribution to monitoring and evaluating school performance. Governors make a good contribution to the school's success through good levels of challenge and support. All of this has led to improving standards in English, set against a more challenging backdrop where an increasing number of pupils join the school with little or no English. Pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection. The school therefore has demonstrated a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and enables children to progress well. There is a strong focus on developing communication skills, particularly in English, and helping them become more independent. Children experience a good balance between teacher-directed activities and those chosen by children themselves. Both types are planned carefully to encourage children to interact with each other and with teachers and adult helpers. Teachers and other adults work well together to provide interesting activities, which children enjoy and which develop their awareness of a wide range of cultural backgrounds from a very early age. A careful watch is kept on children's development and adults have a clear idea of how well they are doing and what their particular needs are. Assessment processes are being refined to make them more manageable for staff. Classroom and work areas are well resourced and planned effectively to provide good opportunities to learn through play, both in and outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by making sure pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of subject specific vocabulary and that they clearly understand what questions and problems are asking for, so they can answer them accurately.

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	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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?	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?	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	1
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	2
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

6 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of the Laurance Haines Primary and Nursery School, Watford WD18 0DD

I really enjoyed the short time I spent in your school and I would like to thank you for making me welcome. I particularly enjoyed the opportunities I had to talk to you, both in and out of lessons.

You go to a good school and I was pleased to see and hear that you appreciate what teachers and other adults are doing for you to give you a good start. It was clear from the way in which you cooperate with teachers and each other that you enjoy school very much. I saw excellent behaviour around school and in lessons. It was clear that you enjoy lessons and the way in which you work together is impressive; you discuss sensibly and listen politely to other pupils. The way in which you look after each other and contribute to life in school is very pleasing and this helps new pupils settle in quickly, feel safe and enjoy school. The headteacher and other staff look after you extremely well.

The school makes sure that you all get the best chances to learn and the way in which they help you make outstanding progress in learning English is very impressive. I have asked the headteacher and other staff to make sure that you make as good progress in mathematics and science as you do in English. You can play your part by continuing to cooperate and behave as well as you do.

I wish you all well for the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector