

West Byfleet Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125081
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315143
Inspection date	6 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Creswell
Headteacher	Miss Lesley Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2004
School address	Camphill Road West Byfleet KT14 6EF
Telephone number	01932 348961
Fax number	01932 356492

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the progress pupils make and how school leaders have dealt with difficulties caused by changes of teaching staff. The inspector met with pupils, some of the staff and with a group of governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector 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 where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Pupils join this school of average size from mostly advantaged backgrounds and with above average ability. There are more girls than boys. An above average number of pupils have mostly moderate learning difficulties. Staff turnover has been high, particularly among teachers in leadership roles. There is extended schools provision available to pupils at the neighbouring infant school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Byfleet Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Some aspects of this very well resourced school are good. Pupils enjoy an exciting curriculum that recognises and encourages their many talents, particularly in sport and the performing arts. Pupils and their parents are especially appreciative of the impressive range of extra-curricular clubs and other activities on offer. The good curriculum contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development.

Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and of their children's education. They voice mixed views, however, about the school's effectiveness. Many greatly appreciate the school's strengths and the fact that their children are well looked after. A significant number, however, express concerns about the progress their children make. Several comment that 'bright children are not stretched enough'.

Although standards by the time pupils leave the school are above average, they are not as high as might be expected given pupils' high starting points as measured by their infant test scores. More able pupils do not all make as much progress as they should; with only an average proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels (Level 5) in the Year 6 national tests. Some of those with moderate learning difficulties also make relatively slow progress. In both cases, this is because work in lessons is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities. Also, although pupils have individual targets, often these are similar for all. They are much more specific in mathematics than they are in other subjects. In science, for example, the targets in Year 6 all relate to understanding the elements of a fair test. This lacks challenge for most of the pupils. Academic guidance through marking is of variable quality. This makes the care, guidance and support pupils receive satisfactory rather than better. Too much marking merely offers encouragement rather than practical pointers on what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Pupils make the best progress in mathematics and it is no coincidence that that is where there has been the most stable subject leadership. The school has been beset by many changes of leadership staff for several years and this has taken its toll on the efforts to secure improvements. There have been several examples of staff beginning ambitious projects to boost standards and achievement but moving on through promotion or relocation before seeing the innovations through to fruition. This has been the case, for example, with writing which historically has not been as strong as some other subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders have a clear and mostly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, but the impact of leadership on raising standards has been hampered by these many changes of staff. Although such changes have been outside the school's control, not enough has been done to ensure continuity of leadership and so mitigate their adverse effects. For example, opportunities have been missed to give staff the opportunity to shadow subject leaders so that someone is able to help take up the reins if the subject leader moves on.

School leaders make use of comprehensive systems to keep careful track of how well pupils are doing. The targeted support put in place to boost the work of pupils identified as falling behind is having a positive effect in accelerating progress. School leaders also monitor lessons regularly and identify points for improvement, although their observations do not focus sufficiently on pupils' learning and progress. This leads to the school having a slightly inflated

view of the quality of teaching and learning. Although some lessons are good or outstanding, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Pupils like their teachers and the very good relationships they have with them and with each other contribute to their great enjoyment of school. Attendance rates are well above average and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, pupils are attentive and show how eager they are to learn. They have an impressive understanding of the need for a healthy diet and exercise, and, commendably, most practise what they preach. Pupils express confidence that any problems, for example over name-calling or friends falling out, will be quickly resolved because 'the teachers are really friendly and you can go to them if you have any concerns'. They learn how to keep safe, for example, through their regular swimming lessons. The school council is run on business lines, with several Year 6 pupils taking on responsibility, for example as marketing directors buying and selling healthy produce as break time snacks. They have raised considerable sums for the school, dwarfed only by the huge amount raised annually by the Parent Teacher Association. They also raise funds for local, national and international charities. These activities, and their key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Governors are active and enthusiastic, with a realistic view of the school's successes and of those areas where improvements are needed. Their questioning is helping the headteacher and other school leaders to drive forward the improvements seen this year, which are showing early impact in beginning to raise pupils' rates of progress. These, and other improvements such as the closer liaison with the neighbouring infant school, show the school's sound capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop plans to reduce the impact of staff changes on subject leadership and on initiatives to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Better match pupils' work and their targets to individual needs so that all pupils are challenged to achieve their best.

A small proportion of the 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.

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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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	3
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?	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.

Annex A

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 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	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

16 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Byfleet Junior School, West Byfleet, KT14 6EF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I am especially grateful to the school council committee for coming to talk to me about all the things that go on in school. You obviously enjoy your time at West Byfleet Junior and you especially enjoy all the clubs and sporting activities. You are lucky to be in a school with such good facilities, including specialist rooms for art, cooking, music and dance, as well as the vegetable garden where some of you help.

The school takes good care of you, and that is one of the reasons why you feel safe at school. I was impressed with how exceptionally well behaved you are. You listen carefully to your teachers and you concentrate hard on the work you are given. The responsibilities that you take on are impressive, especially in Year 6.

The school is giving you a satisfactory education. You reach above average standards but some of you could be doing better. That is because when you all do the same work in class, it can be too easy for some of you and too difficult for others. I have asked teachers to help improve your learning by making sure that they give you work that is more closely matched to your different abilities. I was pleased to see that you all have targets that tell you what you need to focus on to improve your work, but I was disappointed to see that in some subjects the targets are all very similar and so not matched closely enough to your individual needs. This too is something that I have asked the school to change so that you make faster progress. Of course, you can help too by looking carefully at your targets and doing your very best to achieve them.

One of the things that has held the school back is the number of staff changes. Several times, plans have been worked on to help you make faster progress but the staff member leading the new plans has moved on to promotion in another school and this has set the work back again. There is not much that your headteacher and governors can do to stop such changes, but more could be done to prevent them from disrupting plans for improvement. I have asked the school to look at ways of sharing responsibilities among staff so that someone is able to continue with improvements if a subject leader leaves; just as the school council's vice-chair is ready to take over if the chairman is away.

Best wishes,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector