

Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130372
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	315622
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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)	455
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	120
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sian Snagg
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Girle
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Penn Road Slough SL2 1PH
Telephone number	01753 521811

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School is a large urban school. It serves an area that contains significant social and economic disadvantage. The school population is culturally diverse, with 25 minority ethnic groups represented and 30 different languages spoken. Pupils from Pakistani heritage comprise the largest group. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and a large majority is in the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Their needs are often associated with speech and language, or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The mobility of pupils in and out of the school is high. The school has received the new National Standard for Healthy Schools and its awards include an Artsmark, Eco School Silver and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Quality Award. It achieved a Basic Skills Quality Mark in July 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are considerable strengths in what the school offers. The strong commitment to pupils' care and well-being shines through and all staff play an important part in this. The school is welcoming and pupils quickly settle and feel part of school life. The school provides an interesting range of activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about the excellent range of clubs and activities that are on offer and very much enjoy them. Staff go out of their way to plan exciting opportunities that broaden and enrich pupils' experience, such as themed weeks and trips to places of interest. There is a very positive approach to celebrating the diverse cultures represented within the school; the importance of living in harmony and treating people equally is a real strength of the school. These good aspects of provision have a marked impact on pupils' personal development, particularly their positive attitudes and enjoyment of school life.

Standards are low at both key stages. Although test results by Year 6 have been exceptionally low since the last inspection, they are showing an improving trend, particularly in reading and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory and, while much good teaching was observed by inspectors, work in pupils' books, and an analysis of the school's data carried out during the inspection, show teaching is not yet consistent. As a result, pupils from all groups make satisfactory progress overall in writing, mathematics and science. Though some pupils make good progress, the proportion that does so is not yet high enough for achievement to be judged good.

Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well. They are skilful in managing those who have specific difficulties with their learning or behaviour. Teaching assistants give good support and make sure pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are included and supported in their learning. Teachers have effective systems for checking pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis, though they do not consistently make use of this information in matching work to pupils' needs. Systems for monitoring pupils' longer-term progress are not as effective as they could be. Leaders and managers have extensive tracking systems but they do not use the data with sufficient precision to set appropriately challenging targets, in order to ensure that pupils are building on their prior attainment levels and are on track to meet their targets from year to year.

Standards are beginning to improve and this shows the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are successful in promoting pupils' personal development and creating a school where pupils feel happy and secure. However, the senior leaders do not evaluate effectively the progress made by different groups of pupils represented in the school. As a result, leadership has not had such a marked impact upon pupils' academic progress. The school's self-evaluation is not accurate in all areas. Where it conflicts with the inspection findings, its emphasis is more on what the school provides as opposed to its impact on narrowing the gap between the pupils' standards and national standards, and ensuring more pupils make good progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and achieve well throughout Nursery and Reception. This is because of the good levels of support they receive in their work and play and the good range of activities. Relationships are good and contribute very positively towards the children's

confidence and well-being. Children with particular difficulties are supported effectively. Staff make regular observations of the children's development. They use this information well to plan the next steps in their learning, based on what they know and can do. Children are helped to settle when they first start in the Nursery. Those who find the transition to Reception upsetting are treated with sensitivity and respect, and parents and carers are encouraged to be part of this process. The staff have ensured that the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework has been implemented and includes all the necessary requirements. Children's welfare is paramount and the curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the children and their interests. The provision is well led and managed and there is a clear view of what needs to be done to enhance learning further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour, accuracy and impact of the school's self evaluation.
- Make more effective use of assessment data and test information to monitor how well pupils make progress over time and set challenging targets.
- Improve the consistency in pupils' learning and achievement in writing, mathematics and science so that a greater proportion make accelerated progress.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' standards are low at both Year 2 and Year 6. Performance in the national tests has been exceptionally low for several years but showed some improvement in the Year 6 tests in 2007, particularly in mathematics and science. Results at Year 2 are not yet picking up in the same way. Pupils in Year 6 in 2007 made satisfactory progress overall and their progress in reading and mathematics was particularly good. The school's interim 2008 results at Year 6 point to a continuing trend of improvement although, at the time of this inspection, these results and the national averages remain unconfirmed. Taking their starting points into account, pupils make satisfactory progress. They achieve well in reading; the school's actions have had a clear effect here. Pupils' books show ongoing progress is not consistent enough in writing, mathematics and science. In some year groups, pupils make good progress because expectations are higher and marking is helping pupils learn. However, this good progress is not sufficiently widespread for achievement to be judged good overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils speak positively about their school. They feel that behaviour is generally good and that they can share their concerns and worries with adults, confident that these will be dealt with sensitively and effectively. Pupils get on well together and with their teachers. Healthy eating is encouraged in many ways and most pupils take the healthy option. They also attend 'wake up and shake up' as part of the school's exercise programme. Pupils know what they should do to keep themselves safe. They take on responsibilities willingly, volunteering for a range of duties, for example, acting as playground pals, eco warriors, or serving on the school council. Attendance is average but some families find it difficult to ensure children come to school regularly, and on time, and this has an adverse affect on their children's progress. Spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development are good. The school prepares pupils satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are extremely hard working, dedicated and enthusiastic and the positive relationships that they establish with pupils enable lessons to run smoothly. Introductions of lessons are often of high quality with the intentions of what pupils will learn made clear. Interactive whiteboards are used well and teachers draw on a good range of questioning techniques. Pupils are given first-hand learning experiences and many opportunities to develop their language skills, for example through discussion and drama. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow resulting in some pupils growing restless and losing interest. Work in books shows inconsistencies in the way that activities are matched to pupils' needs, which leads to variable rates of learning. The quality of marking is also inconsistent. At its best, pupils are given clear advice on how to make their work better but this does not happen routinely. Teachers are well supported by committed teaching assistants. They provide good support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and for those who need extra help to develop basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is effective in meeting the diverse learning and emotional needs of pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in mathematics, language and literacy although this has yet to be reflected fully in the standards attained by pupils. It provides a good range of learning experiences with an emphasis on creativity. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the pupils whose first language is not English. This includes specialist resources and the employment of a speech and language therapist. Visits to places of interest enhance learning experiences, develop vocabulary and enliven the curriculum. The strong emphasis on sport and personal, social and health education, together with the good array of enrichment activities, adds much to pupils' enjoyment of school as well as contributing to healthy lifestyles and good citizenship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The way in which the school cares for and supports pupils and their families is an outstanding aspect of the school's provision. The caring and nurturing environment provides a calm and tranquil atmosphere in which pupils can share any worries they may have and know their concerns will be taken seriously. There is a clear focus on keeping pupils safe. Procedures for ensuring that records are kept up-to-date are very well organised and comprehensive. Pupils who have particularly complex and specific needs, or disabilities, are given good support. The school makes very good use of a range of outside agencies to ensure specialist help is tailored and relevant. The school collects data to track pupils' academic progress, but targets are not used effectively to ensure that their progress is consistent from year to year. Some pupils know they have targets but this is variable. Those who have them do not understand fully how to use them to guide their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have established an ethos that puts the welfare of pupils at the heart of everyone's work. The school promotes community cohesion very well and this is central to the school's work. Parents are positive about the school's work, citing their children's enjoyment of school, the excellent facilities and the high levels of care and support that they receive. These strengths demonstrate that the school provides good value for money. Whilst leaders have a clear impact on pupils' enjoyment and well-being, their impact on improving pupils' achievement is not as secure. Governors offer good support and know the school well but they provide limited challenge in relation to how well pupils make progress. Data and tracking systems are extensive but not used to full effect to give an overview of pupils' progress and ensure that identified areas for improvement are carried through into the classroom, and monitored. The school is keen to introduce new ideas and initiatives. The reading programme has been evaluated appropriately, to check its impact. However, this is not always the case. Provision is not evaluated rigorously to check whether it makes a difference to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils who are in school for several years or more. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is only satisfactory.

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
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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	3

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	3

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?	2
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School, Slough, SL2 1PH

On behalf of your inspectors I would like to thank you for giving us such a warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were pleased to hear about all the things that you do in school and how much you enjoy school life.

Your headteacher and teachers are very good at making sure that you feel safe, secure and happy and they are good at looking out for new ideas to make the school even better. They organise many interesting opportunities for you to make learning fun, such as the special weeks, the visits to different places and all those clubs that you can attend. You work hard in lessons, get on well with one another and do many things to help your school, such as taking responsibility as eco warriors and playground pals.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and it is improving. You make good progress in learning to read but some of you could be doing better in your writing, mathematics and science. We have asked your headteacher and deputy headteacher to keep a close eye on the progress you make in these subjects to make sure you are all doing as well as you can as you move through the school. Every so often, your headteacher, governors and senior staff make their own judgements on how well the school is doing. We have asked them to focus in particular on how well you are learning and making progress.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector