

Pinner Wood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131577
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	315835
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	479
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Kennedy
Headteacher	Miss Deborah Caseberry
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Latimer Gardens Pinner HA5 3RA
Telephone number	020 8868 2468
Fax number	020 8429 1629

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pinner Wood was a newly formed school in September 2006 following the amalgamation of the first and middle schools and educates pupils to Year 7. These schools had previously operated in the same building. After re-modelling work, which continued through 2006–07, this building provided the accommodation for the new school. The current headteacher took up her post in October 2007, following a period with an acting headteacher.

Children begin the Nursery in September following their third birthday, dependent on available places, and attend either morning or afternoon. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than that nationally and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly higher than average. About three-quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is much higher than usually found. Just over two-fifths speak a language other than English as their first language, although many of these are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones is higher than in most schools. This is partly because several pupils leave at the end of Year 6 to transfer to secondary schools in neighbouring local authorities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pinner Wood School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Since the amalgamation, it has experienced unsettled times which have hindered progress. The new headteacher has set about the task of binding the school together with tact and determination and, in the quest for improvement, has secured the good support of staff, pupils and parents. Day-to-day management of the school is good and staff are coming together to work cohesively as the school develops as a unit. It is a well resourced school. Building improvements have contributed significantly to attractive and spacious accommodation and this supports learning well. The specialist provision in music and information and communication technology contributes effectively to the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities. However, there are weaknesses in the provision for the basic subjects, especially in the early stages of teaching reading and writing.

Parents are very largely supportive of the school. Typically one parent writes, 'My children enjoy school and I feel this is because the physical environment is nice and well cared for, the work that they do challenges them and the staff are caring, friendly and approachable.' Pupils' behaviour is a strength, as is their general personal development. Most show very good working attitudes and a pride in what they do, shown in the neatness of much of their work. Pupils enjoy school. They fulfil responsibilities eagerly. They have a good understanding of healthy and safe living, develop a satisfactory understanding of economic awareness and acquire sound skills for their future education.

From generally below average starting points, most pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage, make satisfactory progress, although Black Caribbean pupils do not progress as well as other minority ethnic groups. Attainment in different year groups is variable dependent on the group of pupils admitted but is below average in the main. However, the current Years 4 and 6 pupils are reaching average standards. There is, however, scope for improvement in parts of the school because staff do not always challenge pupils enough in some of the tasks they give them. In particular, this affects writing attainment adversely and it is below expectations in many classes. Standards reached by Year 2 are not as high as they could be, especially in writing, because teaching in Years 1 and 2, overall, is not as strong as in Years 3 to 7. Some staff are not yet fully aware that they have as much responsibility as the inclusion leader, in making sure that pupils who have learning difficulties, particularly in reading and writing, and those whose first language is other than English make sufficient progress.

This is a caring school where pupils are well looked after. There are good procedures for safeguarding pupils. However, there is not enough rigour in using assessments to make sure that all pupils make the best possible progress. The monitoring skills of several staff in positions of responsibility, other than the senior leadership team, are at an early stage of development. The new headteacher is alert to the situation and shows a clear determination to improve with staff the all-round provision for the pupils. She is accurately assessing strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and leadership and management. She is harnessing and promoting the expertise of staff through further training. Currently the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is variable but generally below expectations, especially in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development. The children generally make satisfactory progress by the end of Reception, although their attainment is often below expectations because of weaknesses in their language and mathematical development. However, they make good progress in their creative, personal, social and emotional development in which many children reach expectations. This is because of the imaginative opportunities to take part in role-play and to make pictures and models from different media. The spacious internal and external accommodation enables the children to select activities independently. Teaching is satisfactory. There are some good features. In one Reception class, the teacher used puppets well in an activity that supported the children's addition skills as they gathered two lots of eggs from 'the farm' and added up the total. The Foundation Stage leader is quite new to the role and gaining in expertise and confidence. For example, assessments and record keeping are improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attainment by the end of Year 2 especially in writing, by improving the quality of teaching and challenging pupils more effectively.
- Use assessment more incisively to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress, particularly those who experience learning difficulties or do not understand English fully.
- Ensure that all staff who have leadership and management responsibilities adopt strategies to raise attainment.
- Investigate the reasons for the poorer progress of Black Caribbean pupils and take decisive action to improve their rates of 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 achieve satisfactorily, although attainment is below average. While attainment varies in different year groups, it is currently below average in Years 2 and 7 especially in writing, but also in reading. It is at expected levels in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Writing is the weakest element throughout the school because not enough demands are made on pupils' writing skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not receive a secure enough grounding in learning letter sounds, nor are they given enough opportunities to write creatively.

Girls make better progress than the boys in English and the reverse is the case in mathematics. Pupils with special needs have not made enough progress, particularly in English. Pupils who have little English make a good start when they first arrive, make good progress, but do not build on this good beginning. Generally, pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar rates of progress to other pupils, except Black Caribbean pupils who make less progress than their contemporaries nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and most adopt very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils know the advantages of eating healthily and taking exercise and many of the pupils take part in sport and other after school activities. They thoroughly enjoy these. They know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils relate well to each other. They show a healthy respect for one another's beliefs and customs. Pupils feel safe in school and confidently talk to adults if they have a concern. They are aware of dangers on the roads and the precautions they need to take to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils execute their various responsibilities well, for example as librarians and as members of the school and key stage councils. The school council successfully organises support for various charities at regular intervals. Pupils develop satisfactory skills that will contribute to their economic well-being. Their attendance is satisfactory and most pupils are punctual.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Lessons are usually conducted in a calm, pleasant environment that supports pupils' learning. The specialist teaching of music is a particular strength. Teachers prepare their lessons well and share the learning intentions effectively. However, they do not often make clear to pupils what successful learning will look like. Nevertheless, this is done well amongst older pupils when they undertake different types of writing and check against a list of what should be included in particular writing styles. Marking is satisfactory. It is up to date, supportive of pupils' efforts, but does not help them enough to improve. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory. There is a particular overuse of worksheets in Years 1 and 2 in English and other subjects, which do not make enough demands of pupils' own writing skills. This overuse also extends to some older classes, for example in history and geography, and does occasionally contribute to dull and unchallenging work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is developing as staff seek to make it more imaginative and interesting for pupils. Visits to places of interest support learning well, for example, Year 6's visit to a discovery centre promotes their interest in science. Residential visits encourage a good range of skills and learning from first-hand experiences. Occasional visitors with particular skills and knowledge, such as authors, artists and sculptors, contribute stimulating experiences and add quality to the arts. The good attention to music, art and drama, together with the good provision for personal, social and health education, support pupils' personal development well. Pupils develop interests from their good attendance at the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for pupils who have difficulties in reading and writing, and for those whose first language is other than English, are not managed well enough to ensure that these pupils always make enough progress when they are working without the close supervision they receive in small group situations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral arrangements are good and there are effective links with parents so that home and school are working together. There are good systems to ensure that pupils are well cared for and safe. Good training is provided for staff so that all are aware of child protection procedures. There are sufficient qualified first-aiders, good medical facilities and any accidents are recorded. Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties receive effective counselling. There are good links with external professional agencies.

The tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory and developing so that regular examination of pupils' progress is now being undertaken. Past assessments have not been used effectively enough to assist pupils who have fallen behind in their learning to help them to catch up. As yet, individual pupils are not provided with a clear enough idea of how they can improve their work and what they need to do to get to the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has made a very good start. She has judged the pace well in re-directing the school. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and its areas for development and has good support from the senior leadership team. This team is beginning to work effectively to monitor provision and standards and tackle underperformance, but it is too soon to judge its impact.

The work of other staff with leadership responsibilities is developing. The school is still working to ensure staff understand how to monitor provision and standards with a sharpness and rigour when they undertake their subject and team roles. There is still a lack of clarity about responsibility and oversight of the provision and progress of pupils who have learning difficulties or who are still not fully competent in understanding English. Training has been arranged to raise expectations of all staff with leadership responsibilities in order to secure further improvements in pupils' progress.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Some governors visit periodically, but they are largely reliant on the headteacher to keep them informed of school developments and progress. They have not yet developed a sufficient insight to be the critical friend. They have clear plans for the large budget under spend.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

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	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 the 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?	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	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

31 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pinner Wood School, Pinner, HA5 3RA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our visit. We were impressed by your good behaviour, politeness and your interest in school. As you know, Pinner Wood First and Middle Schools were joined together as one school last year, but this did not go as smoothly as was hoped because of building works. The new school is beginning to settle down. It provides you with a satisfactory education at the moment. You make satisfactory progress in the main but your progress in writing has not been as good as in other aspects of work and pupils' attainment by Year 2 is not as good as it could be. Throughout the school there are some pupils who do not make as much progress as they should. We have asked Miss Caseberry and the staff to attend to these matters so that you make even better progress in the future.

The teachers take good care of you and ensure that you are safe. You have confidence in the adults and you trust them with any problems that you may have. They sort out any difficulties quickly when you tell them about these. Staff know how well you are doing by tracking your progress; we have asked them to share this information with you to help you improve your work and assist you to get to the next level.

Miss Caseberry has made a very good start to leading your school and has a very accurate idea of what needs to be done to improve it. The staff and governors are supporting her in this. The staff are beginning to understand their new roles in the school.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and help the teachers as your new school continues to develop. We wish you well with your ambitions for the future. We are sure that you will continue to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector