

William Penn School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126002
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	322802
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret King-Tours
Headteacher	Steven Kear
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2007
School address	Brooks Green Road Coolham Horsham RH13 8GR
Telephone number	01403 741274
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

William Penn is a small village school with a Quaker foundation. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and most speak English as a first language. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below that found in other schools, although there are more pupils than average with statements of special educational needs. After a period of instability, the school now has a permanent team of teachers, including headteacher and assistant headteacher. When William Penn School was inspected in May 2007, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

William Penn School provides a good level of education and outstanding care for its pupils. This school has good leadership and increasingly rigorous systems to ensure that all pupils achieve. As one parent said, 'The school has been transformed and I could not wish for my children to be at a better school.' In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with the skills and understanding expected for their age. They make excellent progress in Reception because of high quality teaching and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have made good progress and standards are above average. The school carefully monitors pupils' learning and ensures that pupils get the right help and support when they need it.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good due to the school being clear about its values and communicating them well. There is a strong emphasis, supported by Quaker principles, on pupils developing all of their abilities including social skills. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and this contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make. Pupils enjoy school and have a real say in what happens in the school through the school council. They are very aware of the need to stay healthy, for example through their involvement in the many sporting activities available, and show good knowledge of healthy diets. They are also clear about how to keep themselves safe both in school and outside, for example when cycling. Parents and pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen in the school but, where disagreements do occur, they are sorted out quickly. Most pupils come to school regularly, although some miss too much school due to parents taking holidays during term time. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage their learning. They have developed good literacy and numeracy skills as well as excellent social skills to help them by the time they move on to secondary school.

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching accelerates learning, contributing significantly to pupils' good progress. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to support learning in well-organised lessons that are planned to meet pupils' differing learning needs. Relationships with parents and carers are good and they are pleased with the progress their children make. The good curriculum has been completely revised and now has a greater emphasis on creative strategies such as role play and learning through drama that the pupils love. Extra activities enhance curriculum provision and all pupils participate at some point in these activities, although some are over subscribed.

The school has a clear vision that inspires staff to work effectively as a team. Challenging targets are set for teachers to ensure all pupils make at least good progress in their learning. Systematic monitoring, along with action taken to address any underachievement, ensures that pupils are on track to meet these targets. The school is now developing teachers' roles as subject leaders so that there is a shared and consistent approach to leading and managing the school. These practices are only recently in place and need more time to be fully rooted in overall school management systems. Governors fulfil their duties very well. They often visit the school and have specific roles that give them an overview of key aspects of the school. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start in Reception and engage readily in the wide range of innovative activities. Their knowledge of sounds and letters and their writing skills develop rapidly. The outstanding practical and inspiring curriculum links different areas of learning, and promotes all aspects of children's development. The lively and stimulating environment enables children to make swift gains in independence and social skills. Classroom organisation is exceptional. Well chosen activities strike a good balance between encouraging pupils to make their own choices, allowing them to consolidate their learning, and adults directing what children do in order for them to learn specific new skills. Accommodation is used with great effect to promote learning along with very imaginative use of the outside area. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in school and work hard. Teaching is excellent with imaginative introductions to lessons that make sure that all pupils are immediately involved and engaged. A strong feature is the care and support given to children when they are working on activities they have started for themselves while being ably guided by the adults working alongside them. The thorough monitoring of teaching and learning is pushing standards still higher. Assessment is rigorous, giving a clear overview of achievement and substantial information to staff and parents about pupils' progress. This information is used extremely well to identify next steps in learning and plan appropriate activities that build on what pupils know, understand and can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by encouraging parents to take fewer holidays during school time.
- Improve teachers' leadership and management skills through strengthening their roles as subject leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children settle well into Reception and make rapid progress in their learning particularly in literacy, numeracy and personal development. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and they enter Year 3 with standards above national average in these areas. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, make good progress. This is because accurate assessments and close tracking of progress lead to effective deployment of support staff and well planned activities in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' level of care for one another and for their school reflects their good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is less well developed but there are clear plans in place to develop this aspect. Older pupils take particularly good care of younger ones and support them in the playground as well as cheering for them at sports events. As one pupil said, 'The big ones take care of the little ones so that they get used to the school.' Pupils are also aware of the need to behave safely as the playground is 'a very busy place'. Parents describe the school as a 'family with happy pupils'. This sense of community was enhanced by

the recent celebrations for the 35th anniversary of the school that were strongly supported by both past and present parents, pupils and staff.

Pupils are eager to take responsibility. They are involved in making decisions about the school through the school council and know their views and decisions will be valued. Pupils also appreciate the contribution the eco-representatives have made in caring for the school environment. Pupils nominate charities they wish to support and also play an important part in the life of their village community. For example, the parish council has invited them to contribute to the next parish design statement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned with lots of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through role play and working in pairs and groups. Challenging tasks set in lessons are well matched to pupils' needs and supported by good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. Pupils work well independently, particularly with their writing, and take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting all pupils including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Excellent relationships with parents support pupils' learning very well. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own progress and targets. Written work shows that teacher assessment is detailed and rigorous, enabling areas for improvement to be pinpointed. The recently introduced home/school contact books have helped to establish very effective communication with parents who feel more involved in their children's learning. As one parent said, 'We can't wait for the next thing we all have to learn.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of enjoyable and stimulating curriculum activities. It ensures that these reflect its values, in particular in recognising that pupils achieve and contribute in a variety of ways. The school strives to broaden pupils' horizons; it has identified the need to improve pupils' understanding of cultures and ways of life different from their own. The school supplements its good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) with a variety of activities, including French, professional sports coaching, and popular after school pottery classes. Effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities includes comprehensive guidance for each teacher to help them meet pupils' needs. The school identifies the more able pupils systematically and records provision made for each person; this is kept under scrutiny and pupils' progress regularly assessed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a very safe, secure environment in which pupils' well-being is the major priority. The school knows pupils and their families exceptionally well. This enables staff to form a clear view of any problems pupils face and to find solutions in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. Staff are always alert to pupils' academic and social needs. They quickly identify potentially vulnerable pupils, ensuring that their specific needs are met. Close work with parents and outside agencies has helped the school provide for, and meet, some complex needs. A joint

working group of pupils, parents and staff looks at the effectiveness of such additional provision from the pupil's point of view.

Effective use of assessment enables staff to provide valuable academic guidance. All adults working in the school are exceptionally good at building pupils' trust and confidence and are committed to this being an inclusive school that encourages pupils of all abilities to enjoy and achieve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership is strongly rooted in its Quaker aims and principles that value each child as an individual and ensure equality of opportunity for all. The good leadership of the new headteacher has brought about considerable improvement through building a shared vision for the school to which all staff readily subscribe. He has built a strong, committed team that is improving achievement and plays a key role in pupils' well-being. The school is now developing a shared approach to leadership that is leading to a better understanding of performance across the school. The school uses its staff and other resources well to improve the outcomes for pupils. Governors show strong support and commitment to the school.

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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?	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	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	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 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	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	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Penn School, Coolham RH13 8GR

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave to the other HMI and me when we came to your school recently. We really enjoyed seeing you working in lessons and playing outside and it was good to talk to you about what it is like at your school. We particularly enjoyed listening to the choir in assembly. You told me it is a good school and I agree. You particularly value your teachers and I found that because the school knows you all very well, it provides you with outstanding care, guidance and support.

- You all achieve well in English, mathematics and science and make good progress. This is because teachers make lessons interesting and fun and help you even when you have difficulties in some subjects. You really like the good teaching, sporting opportunities and wide range of clubs your school provides.
- You have a real say in what happens in the school through the school council. You also adopt healthy attitudes, showing good knowledge of healthy diets; and many of you take part in activities after school. You take very good care of each other and older pupils look out for the younger ones. Most of you come to school regularly and on time but a few people miss too much school through going on family holidays during term time.

Your headteacher and the other staff have made many improvements in your school, but they want to make more. To do this, the school needs to:

- ask your parents make sure you are in school regularly
- improve teachers' skills in running and organising the different subjects you study at school.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Jones HMI



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