



West Wycombe Combined School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110236
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278386
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector John Brennan AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Community		West Wycombe
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		High Wycombe HP14 3AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 523318
Number on roll	206	Fax number	01494 523620
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C Burslem
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Cobb

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils attend the school from a wide geographical and social area. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. The vast majority of pupils come from a white British background. In addition, there is a small but significant number of pupils of Pakistani origin and a very small number from other Asian backgrounds. None are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is a little below average. The school has recently undergone significant staff and managerial changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection judges this to be a good school even though the school's judgement is a satisfactory one. This is understandable given the recent high changeover of staff and the relatively short space of time recent improvements have had to bed in. Inspectors find that teachers are doing a good job and that there is vigour and depth in leadership. The school is well placed to improve further. This can be seen in the rapid and professional way the school responded to a recent local authority review. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress. Standards are above average and are rising well. Children in Reception progress well. Almost all reach expected standards by the end of Reception. A significant number of children go beyond what is usually expected. The school takes pupils' personal development seriously and because of this pupils' personal development is good. In particular pupils know a lot about other people's beliefs and cultures. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school and speak appreciatively of recent changes. They play a very full part in village life. The school has improved the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) considerably since the last inspection. However, improvement overall since has been satisfactory because until recently too little has been achieved in developing leadership qualities of staff as a whole. The governing body does not play a big enough part in working with staff. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:* Making sure that the governing body plays a more active part in managing the school and in finding out how well the school is doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in Reception with abilities that are a little above average expectations. They make good progress in reading, writing, number work and in their personal development. The vast majority reach expected standards. The school has until of late found it hard to capitalise on this good start to school. In subsequent years higher attaining pupils did not progress quickly enough. This is no longer the case because more is now expected of these pupils and challenging targets are set. All pupils are now achieving well throughout the school. This includes pupils from differing ethnic minority backgrounds. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and pupils are progressing well. The school's assessment that progress is satisfactory is guarded. This is because tracking systems are at an early stage and the first in a series of assessment tasks is only just taking place. Effective action has overcome under performance in ICT. Pupils make steady progress and standards are broadly in line with those expected. The school keeps a close eye on the needs and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show respect for other people's cultures and demonstrate a strong sense of moral responsibility. Great emphasis is put on their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Art and design is used very well to introduce pupils to the beliefs and traditions of other cultures. Pupils own experiences and beliefs are respected and are used well as a resource. Assemblies give good opportunities for pupils to reflect on topical issues such as fasting and celebration and loss experienced by people involved in the earthquake in Pakistan. Pupils show a strong sense of responsibility and organise charitable fund-raising activities. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they talk enthusiastically about their lessons. Despite a recent change in staffing pupils are very settled, relate well to their new teachers and enjoy school. They acquire the skills needed for life in their next school. Pupils know how to look after themselves, including the importance of healthy eating. They use the limited play space well and know why regular exercise is important. They enjoy discussing issues and making decisions on matters raised by the School Council and they do so in a responsible manner. Attendance is good and there is very little unauthorised absence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'Work is more interesting now' sums up what many pupils feel about their schooling. Pupils have got it right. Teaching and learning are good. Clear guidelines and a well defined policy for teaching and learning have ensured that existing and new staff have gelled well. Consistency of practice exists because the headteacher, aided by senior managers, has made expectations plain. Relationships are relaxed and little time is wasted in lessons. This creates good conditions for learning. Planning now takes account of the full ability range. Pupils report increased opportunities to investigate, solve problems and work together. Year 4 pupils spoke well of a changed classroom layout that helped them share thoughts as they leafed through newspapers noting key characteristics in preparation for their own writing. This helps pupils acquire valuable work skills and adds to the interest of lessons. Some work is made exciting by linking work across subjects. For example, in ICT older pupils made a PowerPoint presentation on World War Two. Good use is being made of interactive whiteboards to make demonstrations engaging and informative. This prepares pupils well for work later in the lesson. All teachers work well with teaching assistants. This helps pupils who have special educational needs to do well. Marking is very good and helps pupils see what to do next. As one older girl in a literacy lesson involving writing said 'I'm trying to build more suspense into my work.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers pupils a good curriculum. Pupils undertake a wide range of work. Statutory requirements are met well. The recent emphasis on raising pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy means that all pupils receive appropriately challenging work. A wide variety of educational visits provides a stimulating context for learning. The curriculum takes good account of the differing needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and take part fully in what the school has to offer. There are many occasions when pupils learn from and contribute to activities within the locality. A good range of extra curricular clubs gives pupils good opportunities to be active.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory standards of care, guidance and support although the school judges this to be good. Whilst aspects of care are good, some improvement is still needed to accommodation to justify the school's view. Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure that visits outside the school are conducted safely. Good induction arrangements for admitting new children to the Reception class means that they quickly settle into school life. Pupils said that instances of bullying are very rare and that prompt action is taken if it happens. There are effective child protection procedures in place. Risk assessments, for example for an imminent residential visit, are in place. Lessons and assemblies are used well to promote the pupils' emotional and personal development. Systems to track pupils' progress have recently been revised and are satisfactory. They are used well to match work to pupils' needs. Although there have been significant improvements in the building the site still makes supervision difficult. The school is aware of what needs to be done to overcome the few remaining issues in this area.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

'There have been many initiatives aimed at making our school better, safer and a more exciting place to learn.' So speaks a parent. Inspectors find that many of these have added to what the school can offer pupils. Much of this is down to the drive of the headteacher. She has established a close partnership with the local education authority and has used this well as a springboard to bring about a raft of recent changes. New appointments have been made with an eye to plugging gaps in leadership. A collegiate approach has created a good sense of team spirit. Until recently efforts at developing leadership qualities in other staff have met with mixed success but new appointments and involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme have led to significant improvement in this. Performance management procedures are allied well to developing the role of subject leaders. A sharp analysis of results has helped identify shortcomings. Monitoring is well structured so that the school has a good insight into its strengths

and weaknesses. Priorities for the future are well targeted and well planned. The school is well placed to improve further. A satisfactory partnership with parents has been established. Their views have been sought on important matters, such as changing the times of the school day. The governing body has not been effective enough. It is kept well informed by the headteacher on how well the school is doing. However it has not been proactive enough in seeking information themselves or in helping the headteacher move the school forward.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful to us when we visited your school a short time ago. We enjoyed our time with you, and are pleased to let you know what we decided as a result of our visit.

You know your school well and we agree with you when you said to us that it is good. We thoroughly enjoyed our discussion with you and the mature and thoughtful way in which you expressed your views. Through the School Council you make sensible suggestions to help make the school even better. We found your behaviour to be outstandingly good. You know a lot about other people's beliefs and cultures because the school thinks this is important and gives you a lot of opportunities to do so. We can see that you play a full part in the life of the village. It is clear to us that you enjoy lessons. Much of the work you have done this year has been interesting and is making you think and work hard. Many of you told us this.

Your teachers are giving you good advice about how to improve your work and we can see that you try hard to follow this. Your teachers have got some very good ideas for making the school better still. We know that you will help them in this and we have asked your governing body to do the same.