



Warden Hill Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109570
Local Authority LUTON
Inspection number 288428
Inspection date 28 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Paull

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Birdsfoot Lane
School category	Community		Luton
Age range of pupils	4-7		Bedfordshire LU3 2DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 595150
Number on roll (school)	267	Fax number	01582 595150
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Bye
		Headteacher	Mrs G Mastrogiovanni
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

Description of the school

Warden Hill is an average size infant school. Its pupils are drawn from a wide area and the social mix is broad. The majority come from a White British background. Other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, and most of these pupils have a Pakistani heritage. A little over one fifth of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is high compared with other schools. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The number known to qualify for free school meals is about average. The school has a basic skills Quality Mark, the Investors in People award and is currently seeking recognition as a healthy school. It has also won awards in the local Luton in Bloom festival.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an exceptionally effective school - a judgement that is better than the school's modest view of itself as being good. Its excellence stems from very high quality leadership, management and governance. Everything is done to ensure that pupils' progress is maximised from the moment they begin in Reception. Starting points are below average. The quality of provision for children in the Reception is excellent, so they progress at a very fast rate. As a result, by the end of the year, most of them reach expected goals. Outstanding teaching and learning continue through the main school, resulting in excellent achievement. By the end of Year 2, as indicated by the results of national assessments, standards are consistently above average and, in some instances, exceptional. That said, pupils' writing is not as consistently strong as reading and mathematics. This is recognised already in improvement planning and a two-year cycle of development is underway. Nevertheless, high quality basic skills, linked with very good attitudes, mean that pupils are prepared excellently for the next stage in their education. Pupils with English as an additional language make very rapid progress, as do pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, towards the individual targets that are set for them. Target setting and communication with pupils are generally key features of the school's success. For example, pupils' literacy books have individual targets on the front cover. As they are reached, a new one is added in simple language pupils can understand. Numeracy books have similar targets. Marking is conscientious and up to date, which has further impact on this important dialogue. It is one reason why teaching and learning are so good and ensure that the school's formal and challenging targets, agreed with the local authority, are met or exceeded.

Exceptional care support and guidance, coupled to excellence of curriculum planning, result in outstanding personal development. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong indeed. Pupils are genuinely excited by what they learn. Their concentration and behaviour are good and they co-operate effectively with each other and with adults. They have a good regard for safe practices both in and out of school. Their knowledge of the importance of healthy foods and exercise are excellent. They make good contributions to the immediate school community, operating as monitors in a variety of helpful situations. Those who carry out this work are proud of the contributions that they make. There are so many who want to be included that the jobs are shared on rotation. Resources are deployed very effectively, although the way classrooms are designed leads to some inconvenience when pupils are seated altogether on the floor. In older age groups especially, they are sometimes cramped, so movement of arms or feet causes accidental contact with others. Relative loss of concentration then results. Pupils are, however, very understanding and quickly say 'sorry' when it occurs. This is typical of their kindness and mature responses.

What the school should do to improve further

This outstanding school has no major weaknesses. To ensure that it maintains its excellence, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Complete the focus on pupils' writing.
- They should also investigate the cramped arrangements for pupils when they sit together on classroom carpets, with a view to making alterations, so learning conditions are even more effective.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, which is reflected in the school's recent Quality Mark Awards. In other subjects, much of pupils' work on display is above expected levels for the relevant age. The results of Year 2 national assessments reflect this positive picture and demonstrate that pupils make particularly good progress. These have been above average in all subjects since 2001. In 2006, results rose from the previous years and, in mathematics, were exceptionally high. From starting points that, overall, are below average, children from all backgrounds and of all abilities achieve exceptionally well in the Reception. Most reach the expected goals. Excellent achievement continues through Years 1 and 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is exemplary. Nearly all parents are remarkably complimentary about their children's personal progress and are correct in their views. A typical comment refers to the school's caring, healthy and helpful ethos that makes a real difference and '...reflects on my children.' In the Reception, personal, social and emotional development is excellent. Children are very confident, often excited with their work, and settle down quickly at the start of sessions. Nearly all pupils explain that they enjoy school very much indeed. Another parent commented that her daughter thoroughly enjoys the small groups that help her to 'catch up on basic skills.' Excellent progress in such skills, by all pupils, linked to their helpful attitudes and good behaviour, means that they are prepared outstandingly well for the future. Attendance is currently a little above average, which is an improvement on last year when it was average. Pupils know a great deal about how to stay healthy. They speak very convincingly, for example, about eating fruit and vegetables and are enthusiastic about physical education. They know a lot about keeping safe and those who walk to school explain that they cross the road only with a patrol. Pupils' contributions to the community are good. The most telling example is their participation in the Luton in Bloom festival, which benefits the wider community beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Careful checks on pupils' progress ensure that work is extremely well matched to meet the needs of all pupils, so achievement is exceptionally good. Pupils' best interests are always paramount and ways of teaching writing have been modified to improve performance and are already proving effective. This is reflected in an impressive rise in 2006 national assessment results in this subject. Teaching assistants are very effective and knowledgeable. Their work has a particular impact on the speedy progress of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils with English as an additional language are also served very effectively, so their progress is as rapid as that of all others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Exemplary curriculum planning ensures strong links between all subjects to provide an interesting and meaningful curriculum. As a result, pupils appreciate that acquired skills can be transferred across many subjects and situations. In the Reception, all areas of learning similarly provide excellence. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is included very effectively through the school. Pupils' excellent cultural development is influenced strongly by what is provided in, for example, music and art. Visits and visitors, including parents, provide very effective information about minority ethnic cultures and the beliefs of world faiths. What is taught is also adapted effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school looks after its pupils' interests academically and personally very well indeed. Its tracking of individual's progress indicates quickly whether individuals are progressing as they should. Class teachers are fully involved in the process and any necessary intervention is planned highly effectively. This applies equally for pupils across the range of ethnicities represented. Pupils' well-being is paramount. All statutorily required practices, such as child protection and safeguarding are fully in place. Policies to ensure good behaviour, as well as awards and systems to promote and keep checks are applied very effectively. Links with outside agencies are pursued rigorously, so specialist advice can be sought and acted on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

All aspects of leadership and management are outstanding. All of the school's work is checked and monitored in an efficient, yet human, spirit of co-operation between all staff. The aim is to ensure that high standards are maintained for and on behalf of all pupils. Parents recognise this quality, as shown in overwhelmingly positive responses in questionnaires. Forward planning is thoughtful and proactive. Whatever the headteacher, together with governors and senior staff, have recently prioritised for improvement, the actions taken have quickly had a positive effect. Standards in writing, for example, are already better after developmental work began last year. Governors are fully involved in decision making and have a high level of understanding of the school's strengths and how they can be used to spread excellence even further. This track record shows that self evaluation is extremely accurate and that the capacity to improve further is excellent. With this degree of excellence behind it, the school is achieving outstanding value for money.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

1 March 2007

Dear Children

Warden Hill Infant School, Birdsfoot Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 2DN

Thank you for being so kind and friendly when I visited your school. You helped such a lot to make the day go smoothly. I enjoyed speaking to you and seeing your work. It is excellent that so many of you told me that you believe your teachers teach you very well and look after you carefully while you are there. I agree with you about these ideas. I also enjoyed talking to the lunchtime monitors and to everyone else whom I spoke to. I agree with you that your school is excellent and that your work is of high quality.

Here are some more things that I liked about your school.

- You make exceptional progress in your work.
- The way that you work with your teachers and play with each other is excellent.
- Your behaviour is good.
- Your school helps you to grow up confidently, so you are very willing to co-operate with others and to contribute to events like Luton in Bloom.
- Your teachers help you learn in lots of different ways.
- People who run your school plan very carefully for the school's future.

Here are two things that I think will help to keep your school excellent.

- I have asked the staff to keep going with helping you to improve writing.
- To see whether it is possible to alter the classrooms, so you are not so cramped when sitting together on the floor.

You are rightly proud of your outstanding school. I hope that you will continue to get on very well and that you will always be confident about helping your teachers.

John William Paull

Lead Inspector