

Westwood Farm Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109864
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	310125
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Paula Gibbs
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Deacon
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst Reading RG31 6RY
Telephone number	01189 426113
Fax number	01189 454926

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Westwood Farm Infant is an average size school of its type. About 88% of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The nature of these include hearing impairment, physical and specific learning difficulties. The school attracts over half of its pupils from outside its normal catchment area. Westwood Farm has a Hearing Impaired Resource Base for up to five children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Westwood Farm Infants is satisfactory. There are good features to its work. Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start because of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. However, this good platform is not fully capitalised on because of inconsistencies in the teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress in these years is satisfactory. Effective pastoral care and support and a positive school atmosphere leads to good personal development and well-being for pupils.

Most parents hold positive views about the school and are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Many choose to send their children to Westwood Farm from considerable distances. The school's welcoming atmosphere, the approachability of the headteacher and staff, and the care and support provided all receive particular praise.

With her staff, the headteacher has created a positive climate for pupils to learn. Leadership and management are successfully promoting good pastoral care, leading to pupils' good personal development. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement and on teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The monitoring of performance, particularly pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, is not always rigorous enough. As a result, the school believes its performance is better than it is. Weaknesses in teacher expectations and challenge in lessons identified in the last inspection, still remain. However, there have been good improvements to attendance and to the Foundation Stage. The school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Standards by the end of Year 2 have been average overall during the past two years and just above average in mathematics. School assessments indicate that standards are a little higher in the current Year 2. However, there are considerable inconsistencies in pupils' progress. The girls are performing better than the boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has not modified teaching or the curriculum to address this difference. Many pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics, but a significant number are not making sufficient progress in writing, particularly the more able. Pupils from the Hearing Impaired Resource Base make good progress because of well-planned and varied provision.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Across the school, teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the Foundation Stage because interesting and varied activities are provided. There are examples of good teaching in Years 1 to 2 and, in these lessons, pupils are challenged well and learning maintains a brisk pace. However, this good practice is not consistent enough. Occasionally, challenge, expectations and pace are not high enough and learning slows. There are also inconsistencies in pupils' presentation and the amount of work they produce. Displays of pupils' artwork are of good quality.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their keen participation in activities. Pupils are friendly, polite and relate well to others. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and know how to keep themselves safe. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery varies and is wide ranging but is usually broadly typical for their age in most years. There have been significant improvements to the planning and organisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum since the last inspection. In particular, outdoor learning equipment and facilities are much improved and are now good. Good leadership of the Foundation Stage, effective teaching and an exciting curriculum promote children's learning well. Children are provided with a stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities. Teachers and assistants provide a good blend of adult led activities and those that enable children to explore, be creative and work independently. Children enjoy their learning, relate well to adults and other children, and make good progress in all areas of learning. Current standards in Reception are above those expected but girls are doing better than the boys particularly in communication, language and literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing.
- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging for all pupils, and raise teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and work output.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 and take effective steps to bring about improvements.
- Introduce approaches and strategies to improve the performance of boys.

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' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. However, standards by the end of Year 2 have steadily declined from being strongly above average in 2004 to average in 2007. Although assessments indicate that standards are higher in the current Year 2, pupils' achievement is inconsistent and only satisfactory overall. Pupils in the Hearing Impaired Base receive well-targeted support in the base, and are integrated well into mainstream lessons. They have full access to the activities, are supported well by teaching assistants and make good progress. Pupils who need extra help, particularly with literacy and numeracy, receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved and is now good. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. They have good opportunities to contribute to school improvements through the school council. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave, they have well-developed personal and social skills and have sound literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The good teaching in Nursery and Reception promotes good progress. Throughout the school, teachers' good relationships with their classes lead to positive attitudes and good behaviour. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and informative. However, in Years 1 and 2, tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs. Some teachers use assessment information effectively to do this, but this is not happening in all lessons and so pupils are not always challenged enough. The study of pupils' work shows that expectations of presentation and the quantity of work produced are not always high enough. Raising teacher expectations and ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged was a key improvement point at the last inspection and this has not been rectified. The lack of consistent approaches to the teaching of handwriting and the lack of guidance on how pupils' should present work can result in untidy presentation. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long. When this happens, pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own learning and teaching assistants are not fully utilised. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and enables them to make satisfactory academic progress. The school is increasing writing opportunities in the drive to raise achievement. Displays of pupils' writing are limited and opportunities to celebrate pupils' writing and to use good work as a model to others are missed. In science, there are good examples of investigative work, such as the growth of seeds, but in other topics there is an over reliance on poor quality worksheets. The provision for ICT has improved and is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning. Pupils are introduced to a range of famous artists like Monet, Van Gogh and Seurat and have good opportunities to create pictures in their styles. A satisfactory range of additional activities including clubs, visits and visitors support the curriculum. Healthy lifestyles and personal safety education are promoted well. There are good outside learning areas with interesting apparatus and equipment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and have established good relationships with them and their parents. As parents commented 'All teachers are friendly and very approachable' and 'We have had good support from the school'. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are good. The school has devised clear systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. However, assessment data is not always used well enough to plan teaching in Years 1 and 2. Although an improvement point from the last inspection, individual target setting is still at an early stage of development. Pupils have targets for writing, and reading targets have been introduced this year. Most pupils know what they are working on to improve in these areas. However, they do not have learning targets for mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and staff had gained the confidence and respect of the parents. A positive and productive partnership has been formed.

School self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school has a sound understanding of its strengths and weakness. Effective action has been taken to improve attendance and provision in the Foundation Stage. However, the school has not managed to improve teaching and achievement in Years 1 and 2 to be consistently good. Senior staff have received training to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills. However, the monitoring of teaching, pupils' written work, and the progress they are making is not always rigorous enough.

Governors have received appropriate training and are more aware of their roles and responsibilities than at the time of the last inspection. They provide effective support and are better equipped to challenge the school's performance.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood Farm Infant School, Reading, RG31 6RY

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a satisfactory school. It has a number of good features.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You all thoroughly enjoy school.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- The school is a friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils from the Hearing Impaired Resource Base make good progress.
- Your understanding of how to keep healthy and safe is good.
- The teachers and other grown-ups take good care of you.
- Your displays of artwork are good.
- Your school gets on well with your parents and your parents are pleased with the care and education provided.

There are four things that your teachers could work on to make it even better.

- Some of you in Years 1 and 2 could make more progress, particularly in writing.
- At times, in Years 1 and 2, your teachers could challenge you more, expect more work from you and ensure that the lesson moves along quickly.
- Your headteacher and senior staff should check carefully how well you are doing and take steps to bring about improvements.
- The school could introduce different learning opportunities to help the boys do better.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector