

Pound Hill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125898
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315346
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Oakley
Headteacher	Anne Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Crawley Lane Pound Hill Crawley RH10 7EB
Telephone number	01293 873975
Fax number	01293 873976

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- The progress made by different groups of children.
- The extent to which provision is being adapted to meet the needs of the school's changing intake.
- The impact of leadership at all levels on enabling all groups of pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- The school's evidence that some aspects of the school are outstanding.

Evidence was gained from observing lessons and children's work and a scrutiny of the school's documentation and progress data. The inspector also analysed the parent questionnaires and met with senior leaders, children, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The large majority of pupils are from White British families and other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is not the first language is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also average and represents a range of needs. The number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has gained the following awards: Healthy Schools, Eco School Bronze, Active Mark, Jump Ahead and West Sussex Quality Assurance Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pound Hill Infants is an outstanding school. It provides an exceptional education throughout Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, enabling children to achieve extremely well both academically and personally. The school is outward looking, working very successfully in partnership with other schools, providers and parents to share expertise and learn from each other. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Comments like the following are typical and capture the school well: 'passionate about children and their learning and great fun!', and 'an outstanding school with excellent teaching'.

Children join the school with attainment that is broadly average, although an increasing number have language and communication difficulties or are new to learning to speak English. Children throughout the school make outstanding progress and reach consistently high standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. Exceptional progress in acquiring basic skills, including those in information and communication technology, ensures children are extremely well prepared for junior school by the time they leave.

Staff have responded very well to the changing intake in recent years. Staff provide highly successful support for the increasing numbers of children with significant learning difficulties and/or disability. The school is equally adept at ensuring that children new to learning English are well supported and settle in quickly, so that they soon start to catch up with their classmates. There is a warm welcome to the new families and much encouragement to get involved in the life of the school. Staff make good use of parents' diverse ethnic backgrounds, actively encouraging families to share their heritage and traditions with the school community.

Children respond extremely well to the school's strong emphasis on good behaviour, personal responsibility and staying safe and healthy. Consequently, the school is a very harmonious community where children enjoy very good relationships, gain considerable confidence and are not afraid to 'have a go' or to take measured risks. Children willingly collaborate with others because staff teach them how to plan together, take turns and listen to each other's ideas and learn from them. Children show consideration for others beyond school, as evident from their 'eco activities' and the way they plan ways to raise money for their chosen charity. School council representatives consult closely with other children, as they did when deciding their new school motto, 'Learn, Laugh and Grow Together', which children feel sums up their school.

Children really enjoy school because they are exceptionally well looked after in a safe, caring and supportive environment. Their good attendance illustrates how much they like the excellent creative and 'hands-on' curriculum and teaching. Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. They have high expectations, and challenge children effectively through questioning and demanding tasks. Lessons are lively and varied, and often involve drama, role-play, exploration and group work. These activities fire children's imagination and keep them engrossed. Throughout the school excellent resources, including skilled teaching assistants and the indoor and outside accommodation, are used fully and very creatively. Visits, visitors and other enrichment activities all support children to progress and attain high standards. A telling example of this is the impact of the work of visiting artists who, over the years, have worked with children to produce many examples of outstanding work.

Teachers use the results of their day-to-day assessment of children's progress skilfully to plan their future learning. These checks are ongoing and children are routinely involved in the

process. Therefore, they know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to learn next. Although children receive a lot of guidance to help them improve, there is not always enough emphasis on encouraging children, and especially those at the top of the school, to improve their handwriting and presentation skills, and to check the accuracy of spellings to ensure that these aspects of their written work are even better.

The key to the school's continuing success is the headteacher's outstanding leadership. This is characterised by her relentless drive for improvement, her ability to see potential barriers as simply an opportunity or a challenge to rise to, and her in-depth knowledge of each child's learning. Leadership is also strongly developed at other levels too. Senior and middle leaders make a substantial contribution to improving the school, monitoring its impact and making decisions. Under the guidance of a dedicated and very well informed chair, governors make an excellent contribution to leadership. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and future priorities because they are fully involved in supporting the school and monitoring the impact of its work. Although governors enjoy excellent working relationships with staff and senior leaders, this does not prevent them from holding the school to account or pressing for change. Given its extremely successful track record and the enthusiasm and skill of staff and governors, the school is exceptionally well placed to maintain its high performance and improve still further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

A warm welcome and very close contact with families before children start school ensures children settle quickly into the daily routines, gain confidence and rapidly start learning. Children thrive in a calm, supportive, yet challenging environment and achieve extremely well, so that most reach above average standards by the end of Reception. Exceptionally strong teaching and high levels of teamwork amongst staff underpin the exceptional provision. In particular, there is a very good balance between activities led by adults and those children choose for themselves. Outdoor learning is excellent and an integral part of everyday routines. Direct teaching and small group activities enable the key skills to be taught effectively, and ensure a good level of interaction between adults and children.

The school's successful efforts to improve children's communication, language and literacy skills start in Reception. Many parents wrote about how the new phonics programme is really helping their children's learning. They also greatly appreciate the way they are invited to come into school in the morning to work with their children, saying for example, 'We have welcomed the handwriting and reading morning sessions as we get a good idea of what the children are learning and how we can help at home.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's handwriting, spelling and the presentation of their work.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

- 21 May 2008
- Dear Children

Inspection of Pound Hill Infant School, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7EB

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. I agree with your parents and teachers that Pound Hill Infant School is an outstanding school.

It was good to see you really enjoying learning and working and playing very well together. I noticed staff make sure you have lots of things to do at playtimes. I enjoyed looking at the work you were doing, hearing about your visit to the farm and I saw how good you are at deciding what activities to do. I can see that you really enjoy learning, work really hard, make excellent progress and reach high standards. The staff teach you very well and find lots of really interesting things for you to do.

The staff take really good care of you. They listen to your views and take notice of them. You know who to turn to if you have a problem. I was very pleased to find out that you have a really good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. You are very sensible and work really well together and this helps to ensure your school runs smoothly. I noticed how keen you are to talk about your school and learning, and to earn Golden Time.

Your headteacher, all the staff and the governors do a very good job and are always thinking about how they can make things even better for you. I have asked them to keep up their good work and also to encourage you to develop good handwriting and to improve your spellings. You could help by making sure that your work is neat and tidy.

You can also help by continuing to work hard and take good care of each other so that your school continues to be successful and a very happy place to be.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Taylor Lead inspector

21 May 2008

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Kathryn Taylor
Lead inspector