

Pewley Down Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125286
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315223
Inspection dates	13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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

Type of School	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Deborah Pepper
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Green
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Semaphore Road Guildford GU1 3PT
Telephone number	01483 570038
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Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how successfully boys and girls of different abilities and backgrounds learn. The inspector focused on how well pupils' use their personal, social and independent skills to the benefit of the school, the community and their own learning. He also checked on how well the Foundation Stage staff make good use of outdoor learning to stimulate and challenge the children. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of the school's performance, scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with the headteacher, governors, parents and pupils. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is located close to the centre of Guildford. Most children have White British heritage although around 7 per cent have other ethnic minority backgrounds. None of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage with learning difficulties varies from year to year but is lower than the national average. Of these pupils, some have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, others have issues with speech and language and a few have behavioural difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school never rests on its laurels and is always looking for ways to enhance the children's enjoyment and love of learning. As a result, children make outstanding progress and attain exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and apply what they have learned to their work in other subjects. One example, seen in the 'wild place' showed children working together to build shelters. They skilfully negotiated their ideas, planned together and collaborated excellently when constructing and refining their work. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim 'to provide all the children with the broadest and richest educational experiences to equip them for a lifetime of learning.' As one parent wrote, 'This is a fabulous, exciting and caring school.'

There are many reasons why boys and girls develop exceptional personal qualities and achieve so well, not least because of the high quality of teaching which meets the needs of all abilities and ages. No child is left behind because individual support ensures that all are able to succeed. Those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, speech and language problems or behavioural difficulties respond enthusiastically to the excellent support provided, and achieve exceptionally well. Many parents attribute this to the 'wonderful, warm, supportive and caring staff.' One wrote, 'The school achieves an enviable balance between excellent academic achievement and a happy, positive atmosphere.' Because of this, children feel safe and secure and learn how to take risks and to enjoy learning. They have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives, enjoying the school's nutritious lunches, taking part in energetic exercise and participating in the wide range of extra curricular activities.

The children are highly motivated learners and their behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They work hard, take pleasure when others do well and take their responsibility as members of the Eco team or school council very seriously. They are very much involved in helping the school to improve. One suggestion of extending outdoor learning for Year 1 has proved highly successful. For example, through these excellent opportunities, children are inspired to think through problems and the result has been a further improvement in the quality and enjoyment of writing, especially among boys. Teachers build on children's enthusiasms and make sure that basic skills receive due attention. The balance between creative and more formal learning has been pivotal in enabling the school to build on its success. Teachers are highly skilled in matching work to the children's abilities and support staff play a central role in working with different ability groups. Teachers are always on hand to offer guidance and encouragement, although rarely include written comments in the children's work to guide them on how to improve.

The outstanding headteacher expects much from her staff and provides the inspiration and resources for them to be successful. The headteacher is backed fully by high quality governors and committed senior staff. She has the respect and confidence of staff who are an exceptional team. The children are at the heart of the school's plans and all staff share a common vision and belief that only the best will do. As one governor said, 'This is a school with a 'can do' attitude'. This is clearly apparent in the ways that the curriculum has been made more imaginative whilst the school has maintained high standards. The children thrive here. High levels of enjoyment and achievement prepare the children excellently for the next stage of their education. Underpinning the school's success is the support from parents who are involved substantially in decision making, fund raising and helping in classrooms. One parent captured the essence of the school, writing, 'Pewley Down has surpassed all my expectations. My son has developed a love of learning in a really fun way'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make a cracking start to school life and relish the challenging and interesting activities provided both inside and outdoors. They quickly settle and learn to cooperate and collaborate on projects. Their personal, social and emotional development is exceptionally good and ensures that they are well-equipped and positive learners. Because of high quality teaching and the imaginative curriculum, the children blossom and take a keen interest in everything. Staff have skilfully provided activities that motivate the different groups and have been especially successful in engaging boys in wanting to write about their experiences. Learning is well organised and productive because the staff clearly understand the needs of each individual. They use their observations and assessments to plan work that motivates and challenges the children at just the right level. By the time they leave the Reception classes almost all children are working at levels that are in advance of those expected for their age. As one parent summed up the children's experiences, 'Teaching is both imaginative and varied; making the Reception curriculum interesting and engaging'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more written guidance to the children on how they might improve 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 in 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	1
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

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