



Two Waters Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117108
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279987
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 9 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Ridge Close
School category	Community		HP3 0AG
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01442 256046
Number on roll	223	Fax number	01442 214150
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Graham Ford
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms. Elizabeth Phillips

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school that serves a residential area of Hemel Hempstead. Most pupils come from White British families and favourable economic circumstances. Fourteen per cent come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and a few are at an early stage of learning English. A smaller than usual proportion of pupils has learning difficulties or disabilities. The children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are fairly average for their age. A new headteacher started at the school at the beginning of September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and sound value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's view that this is the case. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher provides effective leadership. She has recognised that improvement since the last inspection has not been good enough and has swiftly and effectively embarked upon a programme to rectify matters. She is supported well by the sterling work of the acting chair of governors to ensure that all those with management responsibilities carry them out effectively. The school has found it difficult to recruit governors. As a result, the governing body is not in a position to fully support the school and its effectiveness is limited. However, the clear evidence of recent successes by the school leadership mean that there is now a good capacity for more rapid improvement. Over past years, the school's academic performance has been significantly above average. In the 2005 assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment remained very high. Standards were just average at the end of Key Stage 2, whereas previously they had been significantly above average. Through the effective work of the new headteacher, the pupils' progress is now improving and is satisfactory. This includes the progress of children in the nursery and reception classes where provision is satisfactory. Through sound teaching these children reach the goals expected by the end of reception. The headteacher has ensured that improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching are now reversing the downward trend. However, there remains a weakness in writing and too few of the most able pupils throughout the school reach higher National Curriculum levels. The pupils' personal development is good and has been consistently promoted well by the staff who show high levels of care for individuals. Teaching is now satisfactory because it is increasingly focused on the methods needed to raise standards, although the marking of pupils' work remains a weakness. The curriculum is adequate but too much time is spent on literacy and numeracy activities that are not linked well enough to other subjects. For example pupils have few opportunities to develop their writing in other subjects. As a result, the time for learning in a few subjects is limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the information available on pupils' progress to ensure that all lessons and teachers' marking promote the achievements of the full range in each class, including the more capable pupils.
- Raise standards in writing, including an increase in the opportunities for writing in all subjects and higher expectations of how written work is presented.
- Work with the local education authority to recruit enough governors to support the school and ensure that they are effective in their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the nursery with attainment that is typical for their age. Over recent years, by the end of Year 2, pupils have reached significantly above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the most recent assessments show that the proportion which attained Level 3 in writing was below average. The performance of pupils in the Year 6 tests has fallen over the past few years. In 2005 they were average. Most of the school's targets for this age group were missed. Pupils did not do as well as they should have done compared with their performance when they were at the end of Year 2. While a high proportion reached the expected level (Level 4), fewer than average reached the higher level (Level 5) in English, and mathematics. Across the school, standards in writing are not nearly as strong as in reading. The urgent action taken by the school this term indicates that the downward trend in performance has been reversed and the oldest pupils are on track to do better this year. Previous underachievement is now being eradicated. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, and the very small number who have learning difficulties do well because they get the additional support they need. More able pupils generally make satisfactory progress and are increasingly given work that challenges them. There has been improvement relating to standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) which was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. Standards are at broadly expected levels and progress is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and pupils' personal development and well-being are strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy school, reflected in the above average attendance. They feel safe and think that it is a friendly place. They consider staff helpful and are confident that, if they had a problem, there is an adult to whom they could turn. Pupils play an increasing role in the school community, for example, through the school council which is an important voice in school developments. Pupils work effectively in teams and older pupils are about to launch a newspaper as part of the development of their enterprise skills. However, the overall encouragement of independence is inconsistent; for example, teachers give correct spellings when asked by pupils, rather than urging them to use a dictionary. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with significant strengths in the moral and social aspects. Pupils' sense of self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered well. The headteacher has identified the need to develop cultural provision further to reflect the diverse nature of society and action plans are in place to achieve this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make sound progress because of the satisfactory quality of teaching. Teachers are skilled at creating a supportive ethos in classrooms which fosters pupils' confidence, engages them as learners and nurtures their development. The good relationships that exist between pupils and adults underpin learning. There is good provision for the small number of pupils with learning difficulties so that they make good progress. In the best lessons seen, there is a strong sense of purpose and clarity about what the pupils are going to learn and how this builds on previous lessons. Planning often clearly identifies how to meet all learners' needs so that pupils capable of higher attainment are challenged sufficiently well. These good features, however, are not consistently applied in all classes. Expectations of the presentation of written work remain too low. There have been clear improvements in how well teachers use assessment and tracking information to ensure that underachievement has been eradicated. The use of assessment is satisfactory. This is having a positive impact on learning. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the marking of work and setting of individual learning targets for pupils are weaknesses and not yet contributing enough to raising standards. These aspects have rightly been identified by the school for further improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and planning covers all required subjects. However, too much time is spent on English and mathematics activities that do not link effectively to other subjects. This leads to insufficient time being spent on subjects such as the humanities, so that pupils are not given the opportunity to develop skills in a consistent, progressive manner. Historically the school has placed considerable emphasis on pupils 'learning how to learn', for example in developing thinking skills. Not enough opportunities are planned to apply these skills within other subjects. The curriculum is enriched well by the range of clubs and visits. The programme of personal education deals soundly with sex and drugs education and the school provides additional physical education to foster healthy attitudes to exercise. There have been satisfactory improvements to the Foundation Stage curriculum since the last inspection when it was identified as a weakness. However, there is still no outdoor area for reception children and the arrangements for them to share the nursery's outdoor space cause difficulties with organisation and supervision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, advice and support given to pupils are good overall. While the support given through the assessment of academic progress will benefit from the on-going improvements, there are very good day-to-day care and welfare arrangements. Adults

are friendly, supportive and very committed to the pupils. Occasional arguments and instances of unkindness between pupils are taken seriously by the headteacher and followed through until they are resolved. The school is an accredited 'Healthy School' and encourages pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. It is a secure and safe place. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and child protection arrangements are securely in place. Pupils in Year 6 feel that they are being prepared well for secondary education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recent improvements introduced by the new headteacher are re-vitalising the staff's commitment to providing the best for pupils and ensuring higher aspirations and standards. She has already shown impressive leadership in establishing the climate for change among the staff and governors. Most of the parents who contributed their views to the inspection support the school well and are pleased with how it serves their children. The school is now in a good position to thrive in the future. The staff and governors are becoming increasingly aware of how they can join the headteacher in analysing pupils' performance and bringing about improvements. However, more governors are urgently needed to share the workload and to hold the school to account. The role of the governing body was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and the school still does not get the support it needs from its governors. Systems of self-evaluation are getting better and the school is making effective use of the good practice of other schools and of the advice offered by the local authority. These links with sources of external support are rapidly becoming established. Senior staff are monitoring their areas of responsibility effectively and contributing soundly to improvements. As outlined earlier, some aspects of the school have not improved enough since its last inspection, but there is now the determination to raise standards again and evidence that this has already started well.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	3	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	3	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	4	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 welcoming us to your school and helping us to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about some of the most important things we saw. These are some of the best things

- You enjoy school, behave well and get on well together.
- The adults in your school care about all of you as individuals.
- You enjoy the clubs and visits that your school offers.
- You have a good headteacher who is working with your teachers to make sure you learn well. These are things that can be made better
- We want your teachers to make sure that all lessons include enough challenges, especially for those of you who find learning quite easy.
- We think your teachers need to tell you more about how well you are getting on and what you need to learn next, for example, when they mark your work.
- Most of you are good readers but many of you need to work harder to make sure that your writing is good.
- Your school needs more governors to help Ms Phillips and your teachers make sure it runs smoothly.

Carry on enjoying your time at Two Waters School.