

Weedon Bec Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121866
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359102
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Morris
Headteacher	Antony Witheyman
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed eight teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body and staff, talked to parents and children, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 148 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Do pupils make enough progress in Years 1 and 2 and are more able pupils' learning needs being met?
- What is the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 and is information and communication technology (ICT) being used effectively in lessons throughout the school?
- Are leaders, managers and the governing body monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching effectively?
- In the Reception class, are the limitations imposed by the indoor and outdoor accommodation having any detrimental impact on children's learning and progress?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average but numbers have risen significantly in the past year. Almost all pupils are of White British origins. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is also average. The school hosts a privately run Daycare with a breakfast and after-school club. These are inspected and reported on separately. A new headteacher, the seventh in nine years, was appointed in September 2009. The school has gained an International School Award for its work with pupils in other countries and has a Healthy School Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This is a good school. It is a credit to the stable and experienced staff and effective governing body that attainment and the quality of education have been improved upon in Key Stage 2 despite the many changes of headteacher. This improvement, however, has not been extended into Reception and Years 1 and 2 where attainment and provision remain satisfactory.

Pupils behave well and, usually in lessons, there is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning. There are clear expectations rather than rules to guide pupils' conduct. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and have no worries about the behaviour of others. The good care, guidance and support for individual pupils is instrumental in fostering positive attitudes and caring relationships between pupils and with staff. These ensure pupils feel safe, valued and respected.

There has been a significant amount of change in Reception, including changes of staff and improvements to the accommodation. Attainment on entry is broadly average but for many, communication and mathematical skills are below average. Provision is satisfactory and most children make satisfactory progress. A majority make good progress in gaining numeracy skills. However, insufficient opportunities are planned to enable children to make more rapid progress in learning letter sounds or developing communication skills. As a result, they remain below average on entry to Year 1.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and this ensures pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 6. Although there are examples of effective teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1, it is not as consistently good as it is in Key Stage 2. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough and more able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. Too few opportunities are planned to accelerate pupils' skills in writing in English and other subjects. Throughout the school, pupils do not have enough resources in their classrooms to enable them to use ICT to support and enhance their learning in different subjects.

The rising numbers on roll reflect parents' confidence in the new headteacher. In their own evaluation of the school, senior staff and the governing body are broadly accurate. The current improvement plan, for example, covers all of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors, including improving teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1. Senior staff are beginning to resume their role in checking the quality of teaching and learning. For the past year, it has mainly been the headteacher who has conducted a thorough evaluation. This evaluation has resulted in many teachers moving to a different year group and all having clear targets for improvement. The school has a good capacity to improve further because of the experience and commitment of all staff to meet the challenges expected of them.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what the pupils can do and ensuring that more able pupils are set work that is consistently challenging
 - teaching letters and their sounds systematically and giving pupils opportunities to practise and apply their literacy skills more often in English lessons and other subjects.
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and giving staff practical guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the provision and use of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning in all subject areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to Year 1 is average but a majority of children have below average communication skills. Pupils enjoy school. In the majority of the lessons observed, there was a good atmosphere for learning with pupils concentrating well and most, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, making good progress. On occasions, where the pace of learning was slow or tasks were too easy, some lost concentration and their progress slowed as a result. Pupils returning to the classroom following individual support to boost their learning and progress in literacy or numeracy were often helped by other pupils to join in with work set by their teacher in the lesson.

There has been an upward trend in attainment by the end of Year 6. Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups. This inconsistency is linked to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' performance by the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2010, pupils did better in writing than reading but their progress remains satisfactory rather than good because teacher expectations of what they can do are not high enough. As a result, the proportion of more able pupils achieving above average standards is lower than it should be.

The vast majority of pupils aspire to and successfully meet the school's high expectations of their conduct. Their responsible behaviour contributes significantly to their sense of security. The school is an integral and important part of the village community and pupils take seriously their duties as school councillors. The various other roles and responsibilities pupils undertake enable most to develop key social and other workplace skills well. Attendance was above average but is currently average because of the prolonged absence of some pupils who were moving to schools with specialist support for them. Pupils' personal development is good. Older pupils look after younger ones and all are polite and considerate. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but the school has plans in place to strengthen this aspect.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in Key Stage 2 and on occasions, it is outstanding in Years 5 and 6 when, for example, pupils used their mathematical skills to find the cheapest floor covering or were highly motivated to act as reporters, writing for the school newspaper. These outstanding lessons account for the rise in attainment and pupils' good progress. A good pace, which holds pupils' attention, challenging tasks for those of different ability levels, and the very effective use of teaching assistants to support those who are finding work difficult are common features. The quality is more variable in Reception and Years 1 and 2 as teachers working with new year groups adjust to plan work for a different age group than they are used to. Teachers are increasingly involving pupils in assessing their own progress, adding to their understanding of how to do better. Marking gives pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Developing the curriculum to better meet the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, has been identified by the school as a current priority. Links are beginning to be developed between subjects in order to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively. There were some examples of this but they are not widespread. In a Year 3 literacy session, pupils wrote notes from a video about the Romans, for example, and Year 4 pupils researched facts about life in India in the computer room. The shortage of computers and other ICT equipment in classrooms means that pupils do not have the opportunity to extend their learning through research or to use ICT to support their

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learning in lessons. French is taught, and strong partnerships with community organisations and a wide range of after-school clubs provide further valuable skills for life for pupils.

All pupils know that they are well cared for. Their responses to the inspection questionnaire were extremely positive, showing how much they enjoy school and get on with staff. The caring approach of staff is a key factor in raising pupils' self-esteem, encouraging good behaviour and developing considerate relationships between pupils. The expertise of specialists from other agencies is often sought to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being met. Every effort is being made to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Transition arrangements are particularly effective enabling pupils to seamlessly move through the school and settle quickly in their new classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's ambition for the school is being communicated well to staff and parents. Subject leaders are keen to once again play their part in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects as it happens in the classroom. For the past year, their evaluation has been through outcomes such as the quality of pupils' work and their progress whilst the headteacher evaluated each teacher's performance in lessons. Planning has also been monitored closely, trying to make teaching more uniformly effective. They have been successful at Key Stage 2 but not in the younger classes.

The governing body are well led and organised. Most of the members are hand picked for their expertise and professional knowledge, enabling them to support and challenge staff through their monitoring visits. The steady improvement since the previous inspection reflects the governing body's effectiveness in tackling the issues identified in the previous report.

The good partnership with parents and carers is reflected in the extremely positive response and comments in the questionnaires. 'Thrilled with recent developments' and 'impressed greatly by the energy injected by our new headteacher' are typical comments. Equality of opportunity is no better than satisfactory because of the inequalities of provision, particularly in meeting the needs of more able pupils before they move into Year 3. The school's strong focus on safeguarding ensures very effective procedures to keep pupils safe. At the time of the inspection, the school was meeting national requirements well. The planning and risk assessment prior to the Reception children's 'wellie-walk' in the rain to look for numbers and writing in the local area, for example, was

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extremely detailed and thorough. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Having evaluated each aspect carefully, detailed action plans are in place and are beginning to be implemented with an emphasis on the further development of links with a school with more pupils from minority ethnic origins.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The headteacher has identified the Early Years Foundation stage as an area for improvement in order to give children in the Reception class a better start to their education. Already, the accommodation has been extended and the outdoor learning area is scheduled for improvement. A member of the senior management team with expertise in teaching Reception children is currently trying to improve on the satisfactory leadership, management and provision with the aim of increasing children's rate of progress. At the time of the inspection, it is too soon to gauge the impact of any of these measures.

The majority of children make satisfactory progress relative to their starting points in all areas of learning during their time in the Reception class. Progress for the majority is good in gaining mathematical skills because of the emphasis staff give to this aspect. By the time they transfer to Year 1, children's attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age. However, their communication, language and literacy skills remain slightly weaker areas, as they were on entry for many.

Children happily play and work together because of the good quality of care and support provided for them by staff. Children behave well and demonstrate good levels of independence, especially when making good use of modern technology such as computers and cameras. However, opportunities to promote essential skills such as learning letter sounds and counting are not taught systematically or regularly enough to enable children to make more rapid progress in these important aspects of their learning. Children's

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learning and progress are carefully assessed, giving staff an accurate picture of how well they are doing. However, the information is not being used to provide sufficient challenge for children, especially in outdoor activities and for the more able.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire for parents was very high compared to the response in similar schools. Almost all of the parents who responded have very positive views about the school. A common thread in the written comments was parents' appreciation of the skills of their new headteacher and the difference he has made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Weedon Bec Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 191 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	67	45	31	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	74	38	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	49	71	48	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	50	67	46	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	98	67	49	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	57	56	38	4	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	91	62	51	35	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	71	48	71	48	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	48	71	48	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	46	72	49	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	74	50	70	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	99	67	46	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	108	73	37	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weedon Bec Primary School, Northampton, NN7 4QU

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. You, and especially the school council members, gave inspectors lots of valuable information. Many of you told inspectors how much you enjoy being pupils at Weedon Bec Primary School. We can also see from your questionnaire responses how much you enjoy school. Well done to most of you for showing us how well you can behave in lessons and around the school and for making the school a happy place for everyone.

Inspectors found that learning in some lessons was better than in others. It is important for all of you to improve your reading, writing and mathematical skills by the time you join Key Stage 2. So, we are asking your teachers to give each of you challenging work which will make you sure that you concentrate and work hard. We are sure that all of you would love to use computers more in your lessons and we have asked the governing body to buy more for you to use in your classrooms when you are working. The builders have made the Reception class bigger, giving you more space for your activities. We would like to see the staff give you more opportunities to learn your letter sounds and make faster progress in reading and writing.

The good care, guidance and support that staff provide ensure that you feel safe and well cared for. Your parents also agree and had lots of positive things to say about the school. Your new headteacher is being supported well by the governing body and staff. All are working well as a team to make school exciting and interesting every day but staff with management duties need more opportunities to help the governing body and headteacher to check on how well things are going in lessons and what still needs improving.

We hope that you will continue doing your best with work that you may find is more difficult and play your part in helping to make your school even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock

Lead inspector

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