

Wendover Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110421
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	366590
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gina North
Headteacher	Mr Derek Hayward
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Inspection number 366590

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They visited 24 lessons, observed 12 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan and its self-evaluation, tracking information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, staff and pupil questionnaires and 137 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether there has been any impact for pupils and staff of the disrupted leadership.
- The accuracy of self-evaluation activities to make secure judgements on the school's work and to identify priorities for improvement.
- The extent to which strategies are in place to support the achievement of different groups of pupils and their impact.

Information about the school

Wendover is a larger-than-average-sized junior school with a more stable school population than average. There are more boys than girls at the school. Most pupils are from a White British background with a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal or at the early stages of learning English are well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has gained Eco-school status and the national Healthy School award. Since Easter 2010 there has been instability in the leadership of the school.

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

3

Main findings

Wendover is a good school. It is a caring school and staff know pupils and their needs well. Pupils say they enjoy being in school and learning new things. This is reflected in their well above average attendance, exemplary behaviour in and around the school and in their perseverance to succeed and complete work. Most pupils are able to maintain the focus on their work for extended periods of time, including when they are working independently.

The school has experienced a period of turbulence and instability in leadership since Easter 2010 when the previous headteacher left to take up a new appointment. The governors put appropriate measures in place to cover the role prior to the new headteacher taking up the post. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the school has now experienced a number of different acting and part-time consultant headteachers in a relatively short time. Governors and the local authority have taken swift action since the resignation of the new headteacher and have secured a full-time interim headteacher that has already brought stability and injected renewed leadership into the school. The governing body acknowledges the need to secure the long term senior leadership of the school. Around 40% of parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaire expressed concerns regarding leadership and management of the school and many say the lack of communication, information or involvement has compounded their anxieties. The governing body recognises the need to tackle and improve communication and involvement of parents and carers without delay.

It is a credit to the high quality of the acting deputy headteacher, middle leaders and staff that during this period of instability there has been no negative impact for pupils' everyday learning and the school has been managed well on a day-to-day basis. One parent summarises what others also say, 'Staff are doing an excellent job despite the difficult circumstances. The quality of education and the ethos of the school has remained strong.' Self-evaluation is satisfactory as leaders at all levels have a broadly accurate view of the strengths and priorities for improvement. Priorities have been translated into a detailed development plan and new initiatives have continued to be implemented, although are yet to be embedded securely across the school. The role and responsibilities of middle leaders to drive improvements are developing rapidly, but the remaining fragility in senior leadership indicates satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment has been consistently and significantly above average for the last three years in English and mathematics, with a higher proportion than average attaining the higher Level 5 in both subjects. Most pupils make good progress. Work seen during the inspection indicates this high quality remains the position for most pupils. However, because the use of assessment and monitoring information is not securely embedded across the school, not all pupils know how well they are doing or their next steps in

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learning. This is particularly so for the small groups of pupils identified with special education needs and/or disabilities and consequently their learning is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress as interventions have not always been identified early enough to support rapid progress.

The quality of teaching is good overall with a small minority being outstanding. Teachers are generally effective at planning work to match the needs of pupils with different abilities and in using questions to extend pupils' thinking and initial responses. Teachers and teaching assistants mostly use their subject knowledge well to observe and monitor pupils' progress in lessons and to intervene and bring about improvement. The curriculum meets statutory expectations and a good programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities ensures pupils have a breadth of experiences during their time at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently secure the senior leadership of the school and build on the capacity of middle leaders to drive improvements across the school.
- Increase the engagement with parents and carers by:
 - improving communication without delay, including information on plans to secure leadership of the school
 - finding ways to involve them in decision making about the strategic direction of the school.
- Embed procedures to assess and monitor pupils progress to:
 - ensure all pupils know how well they are doing or their next steps in learning
 - securely target interventions, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensure consistency in its use between year groups to bring even greater continuity to pupils learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils attain significantly above average because of the quality of teaching and high expectations. They enter the school with slightly above average attainment and most make good progress during their time at the school. Pupils identified as gifted and talented have good opportunities for extension activities in small groups. During a science lesson a small group had looked at the class topic of light and had extended this, developing very good understanding of the impact for eyesight. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress than others because the use of assessment information and identification of any underachievement have not been secure to bring about early interventions. This is improving quickly through the coordinator for special educational needs initiating and directing activities better matched to their specific needs. In lessons all pupils practise and develop their skills well because a range of work is planned to meet their interests and stimulate curiosity about the world around them. In one English lesson pupils were introduced to work on expressing their views and opinions through one boy appearing to graffiti a class display board. It immediately generated discussion and debate that was guided skilfully by the teacher to meet the learning

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objectives. Pupils were excited by the subject and were readily offering opposing views which were listened and responded to with respect. In a mathematics lesson pupils were using information for planting different vegetables in their eco garden to complete work on simple and complex percentages. Pupils attain impressive standards in music, especially in their singing, and a high number play a musical instrument.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and look after each other well. All pupils spoken to know who to talk to if they have a concern and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any issues. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. All have two hours of physical education each week and a good proportion take part in extra-curricular sports activities. Pupils have a broad range of opportunities to take responsibilities and make a contribution to school life; they are able to argue their views with maturity. They have good involvement with the local community through the church and other local school links and raise funds for national and international charities. However, they have fewer opportunities to instigate or influence local issues. Pupils develop their social and moral understanding well. They have good understanding of other cultures around the world, although their understanding of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom is underdeveloped. Pupils' spiritual development is supported through the Christian ethos of the school, although pupils do not always have enough opportunities for quiet personal reflection.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

A good range of teaching methods and resources are used to engage pupils in learning. Pupils know what they are aiming to achieve because learning objectives and success criteria are shared with them and referenced throughout the lesson to maintain focus. In one outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to agree the criteria for a successful learner, which helped motivate them further. Relationships between pupils and staff are always good and teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' verbal input through 'talking partners', small-group and class discussions. The pace of lessons is brisk and time is used effectively to create a productive learning environment. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to engage pupils and to help them work out their own solutions to problems and tasks. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress regularly, although the procedures to track and monitor progress over time are inconsistent between year groups. Leaders identified the need to standardise procedures to ensure consistent evaluations to bring about even greater continuity of pupils' learning between age groups. New procedures have been agreed and introduced, although are yet to be embedded and used confidently by all staff. Pupils are given good feedback in lessons on their learning, but written feedback does not always identify how pupils can improve further.

Good links are created in the curriculum between subjects to help pupils use and develop their key skills, although the use of information and communication technology by pupils is not exploited fully enough in this way. In one history lesson where this was used well, pupils worked effectively in groups to research the wives of Henry VIII and produce posters on their findings. Pupils have good opportunities to learn Spanish and German with specialist teachers. Music, the arts and physical education have high prominence in the curriculum and extra-curricular programmes.

Pupils benefit from good care, guidance and support, especially those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. One parent said, 'The school has supported my child on many levels educationally, emotionally and building his confidence.' The special educational needs coordinator has comprehensive knowledge of pupils' needs. As a result, recent initiatives such as booster groups are ensuring pupils receive better targeted support to accelerate their progress. The school acknowledges that monitoring the progress of these pupils and evaluating the impact of the new initiatives need to be strengthened. Arrangements for transition from the infant school or move to the secondary school are secure, although some parents say they would welcome more involvement with their child's class when they first start in Year 3, to support the change. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies when necessary.

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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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work together closely and have a common sense of purpose that has been strengthened rather than diminished by the instability in leadership over the last two terms. This is a result of interim headteachers delegating greater responsibility to year and subject leaders to evaluate, set the direction and drive improvements in their teams. Middle leaders say they feel more empowered to be involved in, and make decisions about, the direction of the school, although leaders at all levels acknowledge there is more work to be done to develop these roles further. There is a real sense of determination, drive and commitment to improve provision and outcomes further. Senior and middle leaders identified the use of assessment as a priority as middle leaders had not previously undertaken a full role in the analysis of data for their year group or subject. New procedures have been agreed and implemented, although these are yet to be fully embedded across the school. New initiatives, such as smaller classes in Year 6 for English and mathematics, booster groups across the school and assessing pupils' progress in mathematics, have been introduced and are supporting pupils' progress and attainment well. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. The governors ensure pupils and staff are safe. They support the school and acknowledge that securing the leadership of the school is their key priority.

The promotion of equality is good. No significant differences occur in attainment between boys and girls, although pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress than others in the school. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are secure and pupils spoken to said, 'Bullying or discrimination is just not tolerated at this school.' The promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils have good opportunities to develop understanding of other religions, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds locally and internationally, although they have fewer opportunities to explore the similarities and differences across the United Kingdom. The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers on a day-to-day basis and many comment favourably on the accessibility of teachers to discuss any concerns they have on their child's progress or welfare. Leaders and governors acknowledge that communication with parents and carers has wavered during the instability in headship.

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

Views of parents and carers

Close to 40% of parents expressed concerns about the leadership of the school and many comments reflected their unease with the instability. One says 'I am very concerned about the situation regarding the headteacher. I am not happy with the way parents have not been kept adequately informed. We do not know what is happening.' Inspectors agreed that bringing stability in leadership needs to be tackled with urgency, as does improving communication with parents and carers.

Despite concerns regarding the stability of leadership, most parents and carers are happy overall with their child's experience at school and most say their child enjoys school. An overwhelming majority say that the school keeps their child safe.

The majority of parents say they are informed about the progress their child is making or how they can support their child's learning, although a higher proportion than average indicates that they would welcome more information and involvement. Relatively high numbers express concerns that their child is not making enough progress at school. However, inspectors found that most pupils make good progress during their time at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wendover Junior 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 343 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	51	56	41	10	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	58	54	39	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	18	86	63	19	14	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	25	75	55	21	15	5	4
The teaching is good at this school	52	38	71	52	14	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	31	68	50	22	16	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	41	76	55	5	4	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)	43	31	77	56	6	4	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	26	78	57	18	13	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	31	75	55	14	10	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	28	70	51	12	9	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	22	16	52	38	30	22	22	16
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	40	62	45	13	9	6	4

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



27 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wendover Junior School, Aylesbury HP22 6HF

I am writing to say 'thank you' for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us when we came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what we found out about your school.

Wendover provides you with a good education. All the adults who work at the school know you and your needs well and take good care of you. Your behaviour in class and in the playground is outstanding and you work well together at all times. You work hard in lessons and most of you persevere to complete your work and be successful. As a result, most of you make good progress. Small groups of you make satisfactory progress. You told us that you do not always know how well you are doing or how to improve further and we agree. The school are improving this through the introduction of new targets that you know as 'should, must, could', so listen out for this and try to use them for yourself too. Most of you say that you are happy in school and feel safe at all times. You know there have been different headteachers recently but almost all of you say that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job. Quite a lot of your parents and carers say they are concerned about how the school is being led and would like to have more information about this from the school.

We have asked the school to review three things. The first is to urgently secure the leadership of the school and the second is to find ways of keeping your parents and carers informed and involved with the school and its decisions. The third is to ensure that the new ways the school has introduced for assessing and monitoring your progress are used consistently and help all pupils to make good, or even better, progress. You can help by listening and working hard and by using your targets to reach the standards that you are capable of.

I hope that you continue enjoying school and learning new things. Thank you once again for showing us your school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle

Her Majesty's Inspector

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