

Wimbotsham and Stow Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120893
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358872
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Barnes
Headteacher	Louise Ward
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed six teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including school policies, the school improvement plan, school assessment and tracking data and pupils' work. Questionnaires from 40 parents and carers were received and analysed together with questionnaires from pupils and school staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent pupils make the progress they are capable of in reading and writing between Y2 and Y6?
- To what extent the curriculum is matched to the needs and abilities of pupils and how effectively it supports their personal and academic development?
- How effective are leaders and managers, and governance in securing improvements to teaching and pupil progress?

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. Almost all pupils have a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average and the number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. More pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual points of transfer than in most schools. In a partnership arrangement, the headteacher of the school is also the headteacher of a larger school in the nearby town of Downham Market. The school has Healthy School status.

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 that has the confidence of its pupils and parents and carers. 'The school has a lovely family feel and I am so grateful that this kind of community is available for my child,' was typical of responses made by parents and carers who returned the questionnaire. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Improvements to the curriculum have increased opportunities for pupils to use their imagination and develop their creativity, and pupils now receive clear guidance as to how to improve their work.

Caution needs to be taken when making generalisations about pupils' attainment because of the small numbers involved in each year group. Trends in data, however, together with pupils' current work, show that attainment in writing and mathematics is average in Year 2 and Year 6 but it is generally stronger in reading, where it is typically above average. Recent improvements to the teaching of writing and calculation in mathematics are beginning to have an impact and pupils' progress in these subjects is good and rising. Partnership work is strong and contributes much to pupils' learning experiences. The school's links with parents and carers are good and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and well being. Overall attendance rates are average. Although most pupils' attendance is good, a minority of pupils are missing significant numbers of days and valuable opportunities for learning. Pupils receive good levels of care, guidance and support and safeguarding arrangements are effective. This ensures pupils feel safe at school. These features, together with pupils' good behaviour, positive attitudes and well developed social skills contribute much to their good progress.

Well planned lessons with activities that are well matched to pupils' needs exemplify the good teaching found throughout the school. Pupils are motivated in lessons and respond positively to the challenges they are set and the advice and support they receive. The curriculum is planned to capture pupils' interest and to give their learning relevance. Good use is made of resources, including the school's outdoor areas and enrichment opportunities to enhance pupils' experiences. Links between subjects provide them with the opportunity to practise their skills in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). While pupils also have some chances to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, this area is not so well developed and opportunities for them to write at length are in the early stages of being included in a range of lessons. Pupils show well developed levels of maturity as they work together to share ideas and solve problems.

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors work together well to agree priorities for improvement and to move the school forward at a good pace. Self-evaluation is thorough and the information gathered is used well to guide school improvement planning. Staff are enthusiastic and committed and as a small team are able

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to respond quickly to modify their practice to better meet pupils' needs. Action plans are generated and monitored carefully to check that their implementation is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Improvement secured in this way demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further. Staff seek out opportunities to engage in professional development. This is being supported through increasing links with the partnership school in Downham Market that enable staff to share expertise. All staff in this small school have some degree of leadership and management responsibility and good teamwork ensures they support the headteacher well and play an effective role in monitoring the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics to match the above average levels secured in reading by:
 - ensuring pupils have a wide range of opportunities to practise their writing skills in all subjects and for extended periods of time
 - ensuring that the recently adopted calculation policy is applied consistently in whole school practice.
- Work with parents to raise whole school attendance levels to a minimum of 95% by July 2011.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Typically, Reception children start with skills that are broadly expected for their age. Aspects of their personal development and their communication, language and literacy skills are often below the levels expected. Variations from year to year are evident and this reflects the sometimes marked differences between the small numbers of children admitted.

All pupils in all year groups make good progress in lessons and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well to the support they receive and work confidently to complete the challenging tasks they are set. School-based assessment data and pupils' work show that the rate of progress pupils are making in writing and mathematics is increasing as a consequence of action taken this year. Although it is early days, the improvement is significant and the school is focused on ensuring it is sustained. Progress in reading has been good for a number of years with the result that attainment in reading is typically higher than for writing and mathematics. Pupils' good behaviour and their responsive, positive attitudes ensure that lessons are productive and enjoyable. The school works diligently to assess new pupils' needs quickly to ensure they are supported to make progress in their learning and to integrate quickly into the school community. Pupils rise to the challenges set by their teachers and take pride in completing tasks well. This was evident in a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson where pupils worked to convert fractions to decimals.

Pupils are confident that if they have a problem there is an adult in school who would help them. Pupils say they feel safe and they have a good level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They have a well developed sense of community and look after each other well. Older pupils take particularly good care of younger pupils. This was evident in the playground when a reception child fell over and was immediately comforted and

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supported by a number of older pupils. Throughout the school, pupils respect each other, are considerate of each others' views and are eager to take on responsibilities. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils regularly publish a school newspaper that includes items such as interviews with staff and pupils and games and puzzles. Pupils work together well in lessons and play harmoniously at break-times. They understand the need for rules and contribute actively to establishing what actions are, and are not acceptable in school. Pupils understand the important factors that contribute to leading a healthy lifestyle and make some positive choices with regard to exercising and what they eat. Pupils say they enjoy school and want to be there. This, together with their well developed personal skills and sound academic achievement, ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	3
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?

Teaching across the school is good. A number of features are consistently strong and have a significant impact on pupils' learning. These include lesson planning that is well informed by a range of assessment information. Pupils' previous learning is taken into account together with knowledge of any specific needs. This ensures that pupils of all ages and abilities within a class are successfully engaged and supported to learn well. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and this helps lessons to move at a good pace. Skilled teaching assistants are well briefed and deployed so are able to make a significant positive

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contribution to pupils' learning. All adults make good use of questioning during lessons to check pupils' understanding and to help them to clarify their ideas and thinking. This was evident in a Year 3 and Year 4 science lesson as pupils' explored the relationship between gravity and air resistance. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Actions taken to improve pupils' writing include helping them to use a more varied vocabulary, a greater range of punctuation and the opportunity to produce longer pieces of writing. To improve their skills in numeracy a whole school calculation policy has been introduced. Early signs are that these actions are successfully supporting pupils to make better progress than in previous years. Pupils understand and appreciate the way teachers mark their work and say it helps them to improve. Resources are used well to capture pupils' imagination and this helps them to concentrate and sustain their interest.

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has undergone significant revision. Within overarching themes constructive links are made to other subjects. Together with the use of visits and visitors this increases the relevance of learning for pupils. Pupils take part in a number of sports clubs, opportunities for drama and music making, learning other languages and gardening. The Year 5 and 6 residential visit is particularly enjoyed and serves to provide pupils with access to a range of activities beyond their normal experience and to strengthen the bonds between pupils as a group. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and all other pupils, benefit from the good quality care, guidance and support provided by the school. Staff know all pupils as individuals and they provide additional well targeted support to meet their specific learning needs. The school works closely with other agencies to provide tailored support for pupils and their families at times of crisis.

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?

The headteacher, staff and governors share a clear vision for the school's future. They work together closely as a team to realise the goals they have set for the school's work and they share the responsibility of evaluating the progress being made towards achieving them. With guidance from the headteacher, the leadership and management skills of all staff are developing well. In addition they benefit from being able to share their expertise as they work increasingly closely with staff from their partner school. Governance is good. The governing body is well informed and provides enthusiastic support for the school. It ensures that the school meets legal requirements and governors are involved in gathering first hand evidence to inform school self-evaluation.

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Safeguarding procedures are good overall. Strengths lie in a number of areas including the identification and reporting of concerns about pupils' welfare and the provision made to help pupils to keep themselves safe. The school welcomes the involvement of parents and carers in a wide range of activities and workshops, including a 'Reading Cafe' in Reception. Strong partnership links with higher education establishments, support agencies, local primary schools and the nearby secondary school, make a valuable contribution to pupils' welfare and their academic achievement. The school is an inclusive community and all pupils are able to access what it has on offer. It promotes equality well, with all pupils making good progress. The school is a very close knit cohesive community. It reaches out into the local community and beyond and has a well established link with a school in Spain. It is seeking to develop further recently made links with communities that are more diverse in terms of their ethnic and religious character.

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	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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Success in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a result of thorough planning based on a good knowledge of how young children learn, accurate assessment information and effective teamwork. Relationships are warm and supportive, which enables children to grow in confidence and engage in activities that ensure they make good progress. By the end of their Reception year most children attain, and some exceed, the goals expected. Particular attention is paid to children's personal development and nurturing an enthusiasm for learning. Staff are skilled at taking children's ideas and developing them into productive learning experiences. For example, as part of their topic 'Away We Go' children considered water transport and decided to investigate cruise ships. They made their own cruise ship from milk crates and acted out being on holiday, including taking advantage of the sun deck and swimming pool. Good attention was paid to promoting safety aspects such as the benefits of using sunscreen lotions. Linked to this activity were

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opportunities for writing which included making tickets and passports. Adult involvement in children's play improves the quality of learning when they pose questions such as 'what might happen next?', or 'what would happen if?'

The focused teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills helps children to develop the confidence to tackle writing and reading tasks for themselves. They show persistence and enjoyment when working and playing together. The indoor and outdoor areas are used equally well and resources are well prepared and appeal to children. Teachers successfully capture children's interest in learning that prepares them well for Year 1. Productive relationships with parents and carers ensure children feel safe and secure at school. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Assessment information is gathered and the evaluation of children's learning is thorough. Managing the process of securing longer term improvements is less well developed and action planning is at the early stages of development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was above average. Parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They recognise that their children enjoy coming to school and that they are kept safe and helped to lead a healthy lifestyle. They also consider that their children are supported in their learning and make good progress. Support for teachers and the leadership of the school is also strong. Inspection evidence supports these positive views. A few parents expressed concerns about different aspects of the school's work. These were largely specific to individuals and did not detract from their overall satisfaction of what the school provided for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wimbotsham and Stow Community 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 94 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	40	22	55	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	30	25	63	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	40	21	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	48	18	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	40	19	48	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	40	21	53	2	5	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)	14	36	19	49	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	35	24	60	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	40	22	55	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	38	23	58	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	43	19	48	4	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	38	25	63	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

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.



23 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wimbotsham and Stow Community School, King's Lynn, PE34 3QH

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking to you, watching you work and play and visiting your lessons. We appreciated your politeness and the time you took to tell us about all the things you like doing at school.

We think Wimbotsham and Stow is a good school. Here are some of the things we found were good at your school.

The progress you make in reading, writing and mathematics is good and improving.

You feel safe at school because adults work hard to make sure you are well looked after and that your school is a safe place to be.

You work hard and are well behaved and responsible individuals.

You are taught well and you get the help you need to learn well in lessons.

Your teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do in school and you get lots of other opportunities to take part in different activities and learn new things out of school.

Your headteacher, the staff and governors are working hard to make your school even better.

Here are the things we have asked your school to improve.

Make sure that you do as well in writing and mathematics as you do in reading.

To work with your parents to ensure that attendance levels for your school rise.

All of you can help the school to improve by continuing to work hard in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Lead inspector

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