

Wellsprings Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number123710Local AuthoritySomersetInspection number359492

Inspection dates8-9 March 2011Reporting inspectorMark Lindfield HMI

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 3-11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 309

Appropriate authority The governing body

ChairDarren JamesHeadteacherMark LunnDate of previous school inspection7 May 2008

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 13 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's assessments and pupil tracking data, monitoring reports, school development planning and curriculum planning. The questionnaire responses from 42 parents and carers were analysed together with those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- the current progress and attainment of all groups of pupils, particularly of boys in writing and more-able pupils in English and mathematics
- whether the current quality of teaching and assessment is of sufficient quality to secure higher attainment and improve achievement
- how far the school's previous actions to address weaknesses in pupils' progress and attainment have been effective
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate the capacity to make further improvements by monitoring, evaluating and setting challenging targets in order to raise pupils' attainment and achievement.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average primary school and serves the local community in North Taunton. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although fewer pupils than average have a statement of special educational need. More pupils than is usual move in and out of the school during the school year.

The school provides an Early Years Foundation Stage education for 81 children within four Nursery and Reception classes. Before-school provision of two separate breakfast clubs is managed by the governing body.

The school holds Healthy Schools Award and achieved Somerset School Health Promoting status. It has attained a Bronze Award in recognition of its promotion of the environment as an 'Eco School'.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Leaders and managers have been too slow to resolve issues identified at the time of the previous inspection to ensure that all teachers make full use of assessment information to raise pupils' attainment and achievement. The school has a comprehensive and detailed system for recording information on pupils' progress but this is not used effectively to address key weaknesses and to secure improvement across the school. Self-evaluation based on this information has provided an overgenerous picture of the school's performance. The school's development plans do not consistently utilise data on pupils' progress to set measurable success criteria. This limits the capacity of leaders and managers to evaluate the effectiveness of specific actions and targets and modify them where appropriate. The school, consequently, has an inadequate capacity to improve.

Many children start in the Nursery with weak communication skills. In developing their early writing and reading skills, particularly in linking their letters and sounds, they make satisfactory progress. On entry to Year 1 their skills, knowledge and understanding remain below age-related expectations, in keeping with their subsequent weak progress across the school. Although the school's most recent assessments, and inspection evidence, indicates that pupils' progress is improving, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; this is not yet consistent enough across the school to address the previous underachievement of all pupils.

Over the last two years, pupils' attainment in English at the end of Year 6 has been significantly below national average. In 2010 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics was significantly lower than that found nationally. As a consequence, pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in English and mathematics has been inadequate for the last three years, with the exception of mathematics in 2009. Consequently achievement is inadequate.

Teachers build good relationships with pupils and are good role models, encouraging pupils to develop their social skills. Pupils' behaviour is good; they are polite and courteous around the school. They work and play cooperatively together and regularly make good use of opportunities to develop their ideas in paired work. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, including those with challenging behaviour, to develop their social and personal skills. Specialised teaching programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well monitored by the school's knowledgeable coordinator. She ensures that trained staff provide specific programmes to help pupils with special

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

educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory or better progress in developing their reading and writing skills. Parents and carers recognise that their children feel safe and enjoy their time at school. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were quick to recognise the support of teaching assistants; best summed up in the words of a parent who expressed their 'high regard for the role played by teaching assistants, they give such a great deal more to the educational process'

Across the school there is not enough consistently good teaching to enable pupils in all classes to make up for gaps in their learning, despite much being satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning lacks sufficient focus on the progress made in lessons by pupils in different year groups and of different abilities. As a consequence, judgements on the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders lack sufficient rigour. Lesson observations during the inspection identified that pupils' progress is good where teachers use assessment information to set appropriate activities matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities, but these examples of good practice do not occur frequently. As at the time of the previous inspection, assessments are not used purposefully in all lessons to plan work that fully matches the abilities of all pupils. In particular, more-able pupils are not consistently provided with sufficient challenge to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the school and regularly visits and discharges its statutory responsibilities appropriately. Governors understand the challenges the school faces and the need for improvement in outcomes for pupils. They are involved in evaluating the school through monitoring activities such as 'learning walks'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By Summer 2012 raise attainment and achievement of all pupils and especially in English and for more-able pupils.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments are used to set clear learning objectives which meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more-able
 - monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning with much greater emphasis on the progress made by pupils in different year groups and of different abilities.
- Make effective use of the tracking data and assessments of pupils' progress to:
 - set challenging targets to increase pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
 - set clear measurable success criteria for the school's development plans
 - close gaps in children's knowledge and understanding of communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because, despite improvements, teaching and learning across the school are not consistently of good enough quality to redress their previous underachievement. The learning needs of more-able pupils are not met well enough in all classes. The school's most recent assessment data confirm that the proportion of pupils

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making expected levels of progress from their starting points is below average. However, pupils with specific learning needs respond well to adult support and individual education plans, matched well to their needs, helping to ensure that their progress is at least satisfactory.

The overwhelming majority of pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy working cooperatively to discuss and develop their ideas. Inspectors observed different classes in Years 3 and 4 working enthusiastically in pairs to distinguish compound words from two separate words and to identify the properties of materials. Parents and carers and pupils are positive about the good behaviour in the school, which is an orderly place at all times. Pupils behave well in lessons, responding positively when teaching engages and interests them. When pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge or the pace of the lesson is slow they become distracted. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, for example, by supporting them to manage their behaviour and remain on task in lessons. As a result, pupils report that they feel safe at the school and recognise the positive role that teachers and staff have in this.

Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory; for example, they reflected thoughtfully in response to a film about loss, to thought-provoking assemblies, such as on the theme of Ash Wednesday, and to works of art. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and show good social skills and a strong moral sense in their awareness of the consequences of their actions on others. Their cultural development is enhanced by opportunities to engage in a range of artistic and sporting opportunities including a good range of after-school activities. Developing links with schools in this and other countries encourage pupils' engagement with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and regularly participate in after-school clubs and physical activities. The school's travel plan encourages a very large majority to walk or cycle to school. Pupils attending the 'Dash' breakfast club enjoy the opportunity to start the day with physical games. The school has worked closely in partnership with the educational welfare service to improve the school's overall attendance and reduce persistent absence. Pupils' good appreciation of healthy lifestyles, improved attendance, strong personal and good social skills help to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their workplace skills. For example, older pupils are involved in developing their economic well-being through regular fund-raising activities such as raising money for charities and running a Fairtrade tuckshop.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	4
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to	3
their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Although teaching observed on inspection was generally satisfactory, the use of assessment data to plan lessons which are well suited to all of the pupils' needs is inconsistent and inadequate overall. This is especially evident for more able pupils. Teachers across the school develop good relationships with pupils and encourage good behaviour. Occasionally, where pupils' progress is good, teachers use daily assessments to modify their planning to provide purposeful activities well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities. Despite these strengths, inspectors observed a number of lessons where planning failed to set challenging and purposeful activities for more-able pupils.

The school's curriculum is enriched by visiting speakers, theatre groups, access to a modern foreign language and whole-school themes which include art, health and book weeks. Curriculum planning, revised this academic year, has increased opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through links with other subjects. An extensive and popular range of after-school activities include opportunities to participate in a range of games and physical activities and music clubs, including a samba band.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved so that such pupils make satisfactory, and some make good, progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and personal skills. Staff provide a supportive and caring environment leading to pupils' good personal development and well-being; any emerging issues are quickly identified and dealt with. Provision and support for pupils

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

whose circumstance have made them potentially vulnerable are carefully evaluated and their needs quickly met. School leaders have adapted breakfast club arrangements to provide two separate clubs aimed at encouraging pupils' attendance and providing opportunities for pupils to exercise and develop their social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's development plans list a comprehensive range of actions aimed at key priorities but do not provide sufficient measurable criteria to help evaluate the effectiveness of individual actions and consequently their impact on raising pupils' achievement. The school's systems for recording pupils' progress are detailed but this information is not used to set challenging targets and raise attainment, especially for more-able pupils. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning provides teachers with a more accurate indication of their strengths and helps to develop a more consistent planning format. However, monitoring lacks a focus on the progress made by pupils of different abilities and different year groups. This has led to an overgenerous picture of the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupil performance. As a result of low attainment, inadequate progress and inaccurate evaluation of its performance, the school provides inadequate value for money.

All appropriate safeguarding regulations and duties are met and the school's arrangements are reviewed annually by the governing body and senior leaders. Health and safety audits and risk assessments are in place and monitored regularly. School leaders give appropriate priority to the welfare of pupils and monitor support including for those pupils temporarily excluded. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities and holds regular reviews of policies and procedures in relation to pupils' safety and well-being. Despite these strengths, it has not been able to secure improvement in pupils' achievement. An audit of the school's community has led to actions which have helped to promote community cohesion within the school and increase the school's links nationally and globally. The governing body understand the school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the need for improvement and are now involved in setting action plans aimed at appropriate key priorities. Governors participate satisfactorily in monitoring the school's work through focused visits. Through regular contact with parents and carers and through an analysis of annual parent and carer questionnaires they have responded to any concerns expressed. Although this commitment and supportive work means governance is now satisfactory, it has yet to secure the required improvements in

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



These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4	
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	3	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination		
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion		
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money		

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage in all other areas of learning. Adults interact effectively with children and develop warm and friendly relationships. This helps children to play and learn happily and develop their understanding of how to keep safe by, for example, washing their hands. Children readily make choices from the wide range of activities on offer, helping to develop their independence. Most children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes because adults provide a welcoming and exciting learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The use of the outdoor space is a particular strength of the provision, helping to develop children's physical skills and adding to their enjoyment. The school has recently introduced a programme to develop children's communication skills to which they respond with obvious enjoyment.

Leaders and managers have ensured that arrangements to ensure children's safety and well-being are in place and are regularly reviewed. Planning and record keeping are comprehensive and all appropriate policies are in place. Partnerships with parents and carers are well-established and a large staff team works well together. Leaders have identified weaknesses in outcomes and have introduced modifications to provision supported by brief action plans. However, there is not a mechanism which allows accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of these actions and to set clear success criteria in terms of children's progress.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3	

Views of parents and carers

Fewer parents and cares than is usual for a primary school returned questionnaires. The overwhelming majority who responded recognised the quality of the school's work in keeping their children safe, in helping them to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to enjoy school. A few parents and carers expressed their concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils play happily together and their behaviour is good with pupils responding well to the supervision of adults.

Written comments provided by parents and carers expressed their recognition of the school's support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that these comments were accurate and that the school's support and guidance help these pupils to develop and learn well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wellsprings 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 309 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	55	19	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	62	15	36	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	50	18	43	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	57	16	38	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	67	13	31	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	55	17	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	50	20	48	0	0	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)	17	40	20	48	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	62	11	26	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	48	14	33	6	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	50	16	38	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	64	14	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	60	14	33	2	5	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

	nent (percenta	entage of schools)		
Type of school	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	s of a pupil in their	learning,
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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: 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.

■ 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.



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wellsprings Primary School, Taunton, TA2 7NF

Thank you all for welcoming the inspection team on our recent visit to your school. We were pleased to see the way that you played together and how you worked together in lessons, sharing and discussing your ideas in pairs well. We noticed the enthusiasm with which you participate in breakfast club and after-school activities. You have a good understanding of leading healthy lifestyles and we were pleased that most of you walk and cycle to school.

We were pleased to see how well you behaved in lessons and that you were keen to do well. You make good progress when teachers use information that they have gathered, to make sure that lessons are well planned and set different activities that help you all to make progress and learn. However, this does not happen in enough lessons and too often you are not given challenging activities that help you to move on in your learning.

Despite the strengths outlined above, the school has been judged to require 'special measures' which means that the education it is giving you is not as good as it should be. Inspectors will visit the school regularly to check that you are making better progress in your work. We have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to work together to improve several key areas and ensure that:

- you all achieve well and make the progress that you are capable of
- the proportion of good teaching increases across the school
- all teachers make good use of the information they hold to set challenging targets for you and also in the school's improvement plans.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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