

# Wessex Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109821
<b>Local Authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	356634
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Bavin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	477
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katheryn Russell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Stevens
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	St Adrian's Close Cox Green Maidenhead SL6 3AT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who observed 19 teachers, visited 21 lessons, three short sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and made eight extra visits to classes to focus on pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning. Additionally, the team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and looked at pupils' work in books and teachers' marking. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies and documents related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, and school development plans. Responses from pupils and 264 parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- How effectively the school accelerates progress for those pupils who are at risk of not making expected gains, especially in writing.
- The impact of the school's work to develop links between subjects and give pupils consistent opportunities to practise key skills across the curriculum.
- The impact of the school's work in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that boys and girls benefit equally from activities.

## Information about the school

This is a much larger-than-average-sized school, which amalgamated from separate infant and junior schools in 2006. The governing body provides a daily early morning breakfast club. The Nursery class is designated as a community nursery and as such serves a much wider area than the main school. The vast majority of children in the Reception class have attended the school's nursery. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national figure. The school provides a Hearing Impaired Resource Base which currently supports 16 pupils with a severe/profound hearing loss. These pupils mostly learn alongside their peers in class, but receive some extra specialist help either individually or in small groups. They represent the greatest proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising but remains lower than the national average. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The inspection follows a period of significant changes in staffing. These include the appointment of a new headteacher and new deputy headteacher and more than half of the teaching staff. The school gained Healthy School status and the Activemark award in 2007 in recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles and physical education.

**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 much appreciated by parents and carers, including those whose child is supported by the Hearing Impaired Resource base. One comment summed up the views of many, 'very happy child, very happy parent'. Good leadership and management have resulted in considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Most significantly, action taken to increase the accuracy of assessments and to check each pupil's progress more rigorously has helped to reverse previous underachievement in writing for the pupils concerned. Improved systems have also produced a close analysis of children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which identified that boys were not doing as well as girls. Successful action has rapidly remedied this and previous gaps have closed significantly. Different groups of pupils are equally well motivated and make equally good progress throughout the school. They feel that their views are heard, respected and often addressed. That said, opportunities for them to develop their own ideas about activities and take initiative without adult direction in and out of lessons are limited.

Teaching and learning are good because teachers are making better use of accurate information about each pupil's attainment, progress and needs. While most teaching is good and some is outstanding, the effectiveness of teaching varies. Opportunities to accelerate progress by sharing different expectations with different groups of pupils before they embark on group work are sometimes missed. The curriculum has developed well and links between subjects now routinely give pupils good opportunities to practise key skills. The school has responded robustly to the information and communication technology (ICT) subject survey conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 2009. This subject is now planned more systematically and comprehensively, although it is too soon to have had a full impact on pupils' achievement. Care, support and guidance are good. Several parents and carers commend this aspect of the school's work. They are confident that their child's individual needs will be recognised and addressed successfully, explaining, for example, that 'they have taken into account his health and safety and dealt effectively with our concerns'.

Pupils and parents and carers appreciate the accessibility of the headteacher and staff. The governing body, headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff provide an effective team. They share an accurate, although slightly cautious, view of the school's strengths and determine helpful priorities for development. The governing body holds the school to account effectively with a strong focus on continuing improvement in outcomes for pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and accurate, although feedback to teachers tends to focus more on teaching strategies than their impact on pupils' learning. Subject leaders use a variety of approaches to keep a close eye on pupils' work in their subjects. Nevertheless, opportunities to share the best teaching practice in the school are missed. Staff recognise that they are being held more closely to account than previously, and accept this positively. They identify and appreciate that strong leadership from the

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headteacher has helped them to develop as a cohesive, purposeful team with a shared determination for further school improvement. This shared ambition, combined with the school's good track record of improvement, places the school in a good position for further development.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching and learning by:
  - more routinely sharing different expectations with different groups of pupils during lessons
  - giving teachers more precise feedback about pupils' learning in lessons
  - sharing the best practice in school more systematically.
- Give pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunity to take initiative and make choices by:
  - ensuring they have time to develop their own ideas and influence activities in school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Most children join the school with the level of skill expected for their age, although in recent years there has been a greater minority joining with relative weaknesses in key language and communication skills. Girls and boys, including minority ethnic pupils, the few who speak English as an additional language, the most able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those supported by the Hearing Impaired Resource Base, make good progress as they move through the school. In 2009 and 2010, attainment for pupils in Year 6 was above average overall with more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 than is typical nationally. Lesson observations conducted during the inspection, confirmed by school data, show that most pupils in most year groups make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are currently working above expected levels in English and the proportion of pupils working at the higher Level 5 in mathematics has increased.

Pupils supported by the Hearing Impaired Resource Base make good progress in specialist sessions and in class alongside their peers. Older pupils behave impeccably and respond with impressive maturity when work is highly challenging. For example, pupils, including those with a significant hearing impairment, made outstanding gains in constructing complex sentences and using imaginative vocabulary while exploring moral dilemmas, such as that experienced by Henry VIII when he could not have a son. Younger pupils exceeded expectations for their age and made rapid progress within a short space of time when they met the highly challenging task of finding words and spelling patterns within other longer words. Different groups of pupils respond sensibly and confidently to opportunities to evaluate their own learning, recognising for example that they have 'used paragraphs' or 'different vocabulary'. On occasion, while pupils make satisfactory gains, learning is not accelerated because pupils lack a sense of urgency when they are not reminded of specific goals during the lesson.

Pupils participate in sport enthusiastically and largely apply their good understanding of healthy eating and lifestyles to themselves. Older pupils discuss issues related to keeping safe and healthy as they grow up with impressive maturity. Pupils hold strong opinions

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about their school, which they value highly. Pupils, including those with significant hearing impairment, willingly embrace the roles of responsibility available to them. The school recognises that plans to give pupils more opportunities to use their personal skills to initiate ideas and activities are at an early stage. Pupils appreciate the natural world in science and art. They are reflective young people who value the diversity represented within their school and in communities further afield. Although the school has plans to develop community links further, pupils' understanding of local community issues is already enriched with close links to a nearby special school and their appreciation of other communities is enhanced by their French pen pals. Their attendance is above average and they are well prepared for their next stage of education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

Positive relationships between adults and pupils contribute to an ethos of mutual respect that underpins discreet behaviour management. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching strategies and a practical curriculum contribute to pupils' high level of enjoyment and good achievement. For example, older pupils made good gains in mathematics when they moved around the classroom, locating written problems and applying mathematical skills to solve them through discussion in pairs. Teachers routinely plan interesting and relevant activities to meet the varying needs within their class, which is a significant feature in the

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good progress made by all groups of pupils. Although pupils are not always reminded of the specific expectations of their group as they begin independent work, teachers share learning intentions with pupils as a class which provide them with a context for their learning. Individual writing targets have recently been introduced and are already having a beneficial impact because pupils refer to them while writing.

The school successfully organises flexible provision to meet pupils' particular needs. Pupils supported by the Hearing Impaired Resource Base benefit from a good balance of specialist sessions which are very closely linked to the class activity in a supportive auditory environment and learning alongside their peers in class. Interesting links between subjects enthuse pupils while successfully reinforcing skills, knowledge and understanding. An example is pupils' use of scientific principles to design and construct a board game which illuminates the correct answer to questions about the Tudors. An extensive range of sporting clubs supplement strengths in physical education, science, and personal and social education to support pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. These strengths reflect the school's awards in these areas.

Much work has been undertaken to enhance the learning environment for pupils. It is attractive, stimulating and organised to help foster a whole-school ethos for pupils and staff. The school works proactively and assiduously to liaise with other professionals to ensure well-informed care and support for all pupils, including those who face particularly challenging circumstances. The school takes care to ease movement into school with home visits for nursery children and several strong links with local secondary schools ease pupils' transition from Year 6. Pupils with a significant hearing impairment receive a home visit whenever they join the school. The breakfast club is a popular, warm and nurturing provision. Although the activities available at this time are limited, it gives pupils a happy and secure start to the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides strong leadership. He is ably supported in this by the deputy headteacher, the governing body and senior staff. Parents and carers are fulsome in their appreciation of his approachable and 'passionate' leadership style and the changes that he has introduced. The newly structured senior leadership team communicates high expectations of staff and pupils. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. The close analysis of each pupil's progress has triggered initiatives that have successfully closed previous gaps in achievement between different

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groups of pupils. The school's commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes and stereotyping is also evident in its regular links with a local special school.

The governing body contributes to the school's good understanding of its local community and its promotion of pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. It shares with staff a commitment to promoting community cohesion within a context that is relevant to pupils. As a result, pupils have good opportunities to fully appreciate the diversity of cultural backgrounds represented in school, and their relevance to the United Kingdom as a whole. They have a good understanding for their age of issues facing children with disabilities. They are developing an understanding of global issues related both to citizenship and conservation. The school has plans in place to extend this work, including links with other schools in the United Kingdom.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths, priorities for future development and the challenges it still faces. It contributes to the strategic development of the school, not least with a very clear remit at the time of the current headteacher's appointment. It has a strong focus on outcomes for pupils and holding the school to account robustly. It contributes to the good safeguarding procedures found at the time of the inspection. All safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements for staff training in relation to child protection exceed requirements. The school is also particularly successful in helping pupils to appreciate a broad range of safety issues and so prepares them well for making safe choices based on a good level of understanding.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

There has been good improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection arising from good leadership and management. The curriculum has developed to ensure that boys and girls of all abilities make equally good progress. Assessment



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procedures are meticulous and help adults to plan sessions that take account of individual children's needs and so promote good progress for all. Adult-led sessions for those children who have a significant hearing impairment successfully compensate for their earlier years with the inevitable limited auditory input that is associated with this disability. Staff reinforce key concepts so that children understand number and follow stories with the level of understanding and enjoyment expected for their age. Most importantly, they promote social confidence enabling these children to articulate their ideas confidently. The welfare of all children is paramount so they settle quickly and become ready to learn. Adults set a consistently good example to children of how to behave and communicate.

Although topics are selected by adults, children have more opportunities than previously to contribute ideas about what they want to learn. Resources available to them when they have 'free play' vary in interest and so independent work varies in its value. During the inspection, a group of boys concentrated well, harnessed good social skills and made good mathematical gains as they drew a caterpillar outside and counted its segments as they extended it. Similarly, a group of children explored and developed their knowledge and understanding of the world and early literacy skills by using large boxes as 'suitcases' and developing a 'story' about travelling to Portugal. Mini metal detectors are popular and encourage children to explore and experiment, although opportunities to extend learning are sometimes missed because there is no adult available to offer sensitive support without being overly directive.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was above the national average for primary schools. The overwhelming majority agreed that their child is kept safe and they are happy with the school. Very few expressed concerns, but a very small minority disagreed that their child made good progress or that they were well informed about their child's progress. During this inspection, the inspectors judged channels of communication with parents to be good and wide-ranging and pupils' progress to be good. Parents and carers agreed overwhelmingly that their children enjoy school and that the school is led and managed effectively.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wessex 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 264 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 477 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	181	69	78	30	1	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	198	75	61	23	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	123	47	125	47	9	3	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	119	45	134	51	5	2	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	147	56	110	42	6	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	132	50	119	45	5	2	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	134	51	121	47	4	2	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)	139	53	113	43	3	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	141	53	112	42	3	1	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	118	45	133	50	7	3	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	125	47	124	47	6	2	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	196	74	64	24	1	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	182	69	74	28	0	0	4	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Wessex Primary School, Maidenhead, SL6 3AT**

Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to all those pupils who met with inspectors and shared their ideas about the school, and to those who met with me and showed me their work. We agree with you that you go to a good school. Here are some of the best things we found.

- You make good progress and in Year 6 you reach higher standards in English and mathematics than is typical for your age.
- Your attendance is better than in most primary schools.
- You behave well in lessons and around school.
- You feel safe because other pupils are friendly and you know that staff care about you.
- You enjoy interesting activities in lessons and after school.
- The governing body, headteacher and other adults in school work well together to keep improving your school further.

We have asked them to remind you very specifically what pupils at different tables are aiming for when you start work after the teacher's introduction. We have asked the senior staff to make sure they always discuss how much you have learned when they are giving teachers feedback and to give teachers more opportunities to share their best ideas. We have also asked them to give all of you more opportunities to come up with your own ideas for topics and projects that you choose for yourselves to help the school, or your families or the community.

All of you can help by continuing to attend and behave so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

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