

Weldon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121996
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380380
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Chenery
Headteacher	Lynne Wildman
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons led by seven different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, and three representatives of the governing body. Discussions were held with two groups of pupils from Key Stage 2 and many others were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed 24 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by 107 pupils and 13 staff.

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

- Inspectors investigated the effectiveness of the strategies put in place to improve writing and to prevent attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 from falling for a second year.
- They looked at how well teachers use assessment information to make sure that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve as well as they are capable.
- They judged the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by school leaders in ensuring the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- They investigated how well school leaders develop pupils' awareness and understanding of the wide ethnic mix in the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This small primary school is in a rural location close to Corby. Virtually all pupils are of White British origin. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion having statements of special educational needs is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate or specific learning difficulties, or physical disabilities. The governing body manages the 'Launch & Space' before- and after-school clubs and Comet Care, the holiday club.

The headteacher had been in post for just over two terms at the time of the inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Weldon Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Its major strength lies in the outstanding provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, who make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and personal development.

Historically, children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been steadily built upon in both key stages, with pupils achieving above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. There was, however, a significant dip in attainment in English in the 2011 national tests for eleven year-olds. This was mainly due to below average attainment in writing, as more able pupils failed to gain their higher level writing targets. In addition, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities did not meet the standards in reading, writing and mathematics achieved by similar pupils nationally.

The new headteacher's initial self-evaluation identified this underachievement and initiated a whole school focus on improving writing. Significant improvements are already apparent in Years 3 to 6, where consistently good teaching is closing gaps, and there are clear signs that developmental feedback is acted upon swiftly. However this feedback has not always been consistently acted upon. In Year 6, current assessments indicate average attainment and pupils are well on track to achieve average to above average attainment in all core subjects by the end of the year. More able older pupils are now making good progress and they are well-equipped to use teachers' accurate assessment and marking to improve further. Effective monitoring by school leaders is resulting in improvements in teaching. Much is good, but there remains a significant proportion which is satisfactory, because assessments are not always used effectively to set challenging targets for all groups of learners. The introduction of motivating curriculum themes is providing more opportunities to develop writing, but these are very new and the full impact has yet to be seen. The positive impact of these strategies indicates satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and no longer need additional support. But some remain on low levels for too long. This is because pupils are often too dependent on adults, who sometimes give them too much support and do not encourage them to work on their own. Teachers and assistants do not always have high enough expectations for all these pupils.

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The school has good arrangements for caring for all its pupils, and these make a good contribution to their generally good personal development and well-being. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Many have responsible roles in school. Pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of the wide cultural mix in the United Kingdom through visits to a variety of places of worship, welcoming visitors and growing links with communities further afield. Most pupils attend school regularly and make the most of the opportunities it offers, but attendance has been brought down from above average to average by holidays taken in term time.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of all pupils by:
 - increasing the amount of teaching that is good through consistently acting on the findings from monitoring and evaluation
 - making sure teachers always use assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils of all abilities
 - raising staff expectations of the achievement of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and helping them to become more independent learners
 - reducing the proportion of term time lost through holidays in the current academic year.

- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - providing a wide variety of opportunities to write in all areas of the curriculum
 - setting individual writing targets for all pupils so that they can understand clearly what they need to do to reach higher levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the school with skills below national expectations, but because of improvements in provision their attainment is now above that expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. Currently, the standard of reading, writing and mathematics is average in Key Stages 1 and 2. Most pupils in a Year 2 lesson demonstrated average ability to organise their written work in a sequence of sentences using capital letters and full stops when re-telling a story. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, however, were too dependent on adult support and not sufficiently encouraged to build words for themselves using their knowledge of letters and sounds.

Pupils in Year 5 worked with enthusiasm and all made good progress when writing newspaper articles about outer space. They were able to contribute to each other's

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learning by independently evaluating their work in pairs and groups. Pupils in Year 6 also made good progress in mathematics when using Carroll diagrams to sort shapes. All abilities were challenged well, although once more some pupils were too dependent on adult support to maintain their progress throughout the lesson.

Pupils’ personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and the majority attend regularly and punctually, but some are taken away for holidays in term time, which disrupts their progress. Pupils say that they are kept safe in school and their parents and carers all strongly agree. Pupils are sure they have someone to talk to if they feel troubled. Pupil’s behaviour is good. Their active playtimes, physical education and sports clubs, combined with their good knowledge of healthy eating and personal safety, enable pupils to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They are proud of their school community and enthusiastically take in a wide range of responsible posts, including monitors, house and team captains. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The school council leads the school in showing care for others by charitable giving, locally and further afield.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching observed during the inspection was often good but over time is satisfactory, resulting in a slower pace of learning, because work is not fully challenging for the range of abilities in all the classes. In good lessons, effective use of assessment to plan for the learning needs of all the pupils results in all pupils making good progress. The more able are well challenged and those with special

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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educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well, but are not always encouraged to be independent and to work things out for themselves. Teachers keep up a brisk pace and frequently check pupils’ learning. Pupils are confident to evaluate their own learning by comparing their own efforts with those of their classmates. Many older pupils are able to see for themselves the next stages in learning.

The thematic curriculum is in the early stages of development, but there are already a few exciting themes, for example on ‘space’ and ‘aliens’, in which pupils enjoy developing their writing and computer skills. There is a satisfactory range of clubs and trips out, for example a day spent as wartime evacuees. A small range of activities takes place in partnership with other local schools.

Pastoral care makes a strong contribution to pupils’ well-being and personal development. The work of the learning mentor is highly valued by pupils, who know that rare incidents of bullying will quickly be dealt with. The school can show striking examples of removing barriers to pupils’ learning by good quality advice and guidance for their families. Many parents and carers value and use the breakfast and after-school clubs, where pupils receive a nutritious snack in a welcoming and well-equipped environment. The strength in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in the initial identification and targeted planning to meet their needs. However, although some pupils make better than expected progress, there are too many who could make even more progress in their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s initial evaluation of the school has accurately identified areas for improvement. The recently formed leadership team is motivated to seek improvement and has already focused the school’s efforts on priorities, for example, the need to improve writing and the development of a thematic curriculum. Staff are enthusiastic and work together effectively as a team. Senior leaders monitor pupils’ progress and set targets for improvement, but these are only adequately challenging, given pupils’ starting points. Subject leaders monitor the impact of teaching in their subjects and lead training, for example, on ways to improve writing.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is well led and organised. Some members regularly support in the classroom. They ensure that pupils and staff are safe, but are not fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school. The

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school has a highly positive relationship with most parents and carers. They are kept well informed about their children’s achievement, well-being and development. Nevertheless the school does not take a strong line over holidays in term time. Partnerships with local agencies and services make a good contribution to pupils’ well-being and there are some beneficial partnerships with local banks, businesses and places of worship, which enhance curriculum provision. The school has an effective system for tracking the progress of pupils and making sure that all have equal opportunities to take part in all activities. Leaders are taking steps to ensure that pupils of all abilities improve their writing.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and meet all requirements. All staff have been suitably trained in child protection. Pupils gain a strong understanding through their personal and social education of how to recognise danger and keep themselves safe. School leaders promote community cohesion strongly within the school and pupils get a good understanding of the cultural mix present in the modern United Kingdom through trips, visitors and visits to local places of worship. The school reaches out to the local community and has some growing links with communities further afield, in this country and abroad.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is now above average for that expected for their age.

Children’s literacy and numeracy skills develop rapidly as a result of excellent planning. Staff promote excitement and enjoyment of learning through a succession

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of activities designed to match the wide variety of children’s learning needs. They learn, in daily sessions, to identify letters and sounds, and practise writing them in a variety of different media, including the very popular ‘blue sludge’. ‘Dino the dinosaur’ helps children to learn the order of numbers up to ten or twenty, when he gets them wrong and needs correcting. The mischievous ‘Tigger’ often hides letters and numbers in the sandpit, so children have to dig to find and put them in order.

Children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. Their personal, social and emotional development is good. Their behaviour and relationships with each other and with adults are excellent. They fully understand the class routines, lining up when the triangle rings to go on to their next activity.

A wealth of opportunities to develop children’s interests and imagination are planned daily. For example, during the inspection they investigated an autumn leaf tray with microscopes, made sounds with music frames and poured water through a succession of pipes. Staff pay very good attention to the learning needs of all children, for example, by providing calculators and number fans to develop mathematics for the more able.

There is a very well-equipped learning environment indoors and immediately outside. The safety and welfare of all children has a high profile. The good partnership with parents and carers extends to home visits. Leadership is outstanding and constantly directed towards further improvement. Transition between Reception and Year 1 is good, with Year 1 pupils having regular access to the Reception outside area.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a much smaller than average return of questionnaires. All parents and carers who responded were happy with all aspects of the school’s provision. A few positive comments were made praising the school and the care it provides. All parents and carers were completely satisfied with their children’s experience at school. Inspection findings supported the positive views about pastoral care, but not all of the other key aspects.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Weldon Church of England 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	79	5	21	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	79	5	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	83	4	17	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	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	79	5	21	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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"> ■ 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weldon Church of England Primary School, Weldon, NN17 3HP

Thank you very much for being so friendly when my colleagues and I visited your school recently. It was very helpful for us to hear your views and see your work. We were very impressed by your politeness and good manners. We found that your school gives you a satisfactory education, which means some things are good, but others need improvement.

Your personal development remains as good as it was at the previous inspection. Your behaviour is good. You learn how to keep yourselves safe and healthy, and get on well with each other. You are proud of your school and take on many responsible jobs such as monitors, play leaders and house and team captains. The school council has good links with your local community through attending parish council meetings.

The most important things that need improvement in your school are the standard of your writing and the progress you all make in lessons. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they give you more opportunities to write in all areas of the curriculum. We have also asked them always to use assessment to plan work that challenges all of you in lessons, and to make sure that those who learn more slowly are helped to be more independent.

We were pleased to see that most of you come to school regularly, but some of you have your education disrupted by going away on holiday in term time and we have asked your school leaders to take a stronger line on this.

All the adults in your school want it to improve quickly and I am sure you do too. You can help a great deal by always doing your best written work and working with your teachers to improve your attainment and progress. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington
Lead inspector

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