

Widewell Primary School

Widewell Educational Trust, Lulworth Drive, Plymouth, PL6 7ER

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing, English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there has been a steady improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected Level 4 in English, especially in reading, and in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because they are taught well.
- Good provision for the many pupils who qualify for additional support because of their circumstances enables them to make good progress. The gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing rapidly.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan work that challenges and interests them.
- The school is a very harmonious community. Pupils behave well, feel safe and know how to stay safe.
- The school is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the headteacher and effective governing body. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching and learning well and provide support through one-to-one coaching and the sharing of good practice.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the Nursery and Reception do not have easy access to outdoor activities and do not have enough opportunities to make independent choices in their learning.
- Pupils do not as well in writing as in reading and mathematics, especially boys.
- Systems for analysing data are not rigorous enough to provide senior leaders and governors with easily accessible information on how well the whole school or different groups and cohorts are performing in comparison to all schools nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 teachers in the course of visiting 25 lessons or parts of lessons, including short visits to observe the work of pupils withdrawn from classrooms for additional support.
- Discussions were held with staff, randomly selected groups of pupils and a group from the school parliament. Discussions were also held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the controlling trust and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors studied the responses of the 22 parents and carers who filled in the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at the results of a recent survey of the views of parents and carers conducted by the school. Parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day and several who asked to meet with an inspector were interviewed. Questionnaires from staff were also analysed.
- Documentation studied included: the school’s own self-evaluation; the school development plan; reports from external consultants; the school’s records on pupils’ attainment and progress; reports on pupils with special educational needs; and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors also looked at the minutes of the governing body and the work in pupils’ books.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Matthews

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin with fewer than average from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is above average.
- Far more pupils than average leave or enter the school other than at the usual time, mainly due to the high proportion of children from service families who move due to postings. The turnover of pupils during the last academic year was more than a third. Over two thirds of the current Year 6 pupils have joined the school during Years 3 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is around 48% and above the national average. This includes children in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school is owned by an educational trust and also houses a charity, 'The Ark', which provides support for pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The school is due to become an academy on 1 February 2013.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2012, ensure that the planned changes to improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are completed so that:
 - children have access to equally good learning experiences indoors and outdoors
 - children have more opportunities to make independent choices in their learning.
- By July 2013, improve pupils' achievement in writing, especially that of boys, to match that in reading and mathematics by:
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to write at length in lessons other than English so that they are consistent in all classes
 - making sure that writing skills are taught and reinforced through all subjects.
- By January 2013, put in place systems for analysing data to provide all leaders and managers with information that allows them to see quickly and easily how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically start school with skills that are below the levels normally found at their age. Although they make good progress in Nursery and Reception, their attainment at the start of Year 1 is often below average. This is because many children move in from areas where they have not had previous access to early years provision.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and some, especially those who have joined the school more recently, are making increasingly rapid progress and making up lost ground. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen faster than the national picture for several years, especially in mathematics.
- A new system of teaching letters and the sounds they make (phonics) has made a big difference to pupils' progress in reading. Consistent teaching of basic reading skills ensures pupils make good progress across the school. In the recent national assessments of reading skills at age six, almost all pupils met the expected standard. Standards in reading have improved greatly in the last few years and are now average at the end of Year 2 and slightly above average by the end of Year 6.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics, especially for boys. This is because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills other than in structured English lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs get good support from teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to take a full part in lessons. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language also receive high-quality and intensive support which ensures they make quicker progress and soon become able to take a full part in lessons and learn effectively.
- Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium make good progress because they receive well-planned additional support.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in physical education because they are taught very well by a specialist teacher.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View or to the school's own recent survey agree that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers usually plan lessons that are stimulating and motivating. Many make good use of information and communication technology to engage and interest pupils.
- Teachers assess individual pupils' understanding regularly and frequently. The information gained is used effectively to plan lessons that build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills.
- Teachers set individual targets for pupils to move their learning on to the next level. They check pupils' progress towards these targets frequently, often adjusting their planning as a result to ensure good learning.
- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception provides children with a wide variety of activities that promote good learning. Currently, access to outdoor learning is limited and this restricts opportunities for some aspects of physical development and for children to make independent choices.
- The school makes very effective use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils with particular needs and pupils from service families who join the school mid-term. Teachers assess these pupils' needs thoroughly when they enter the school and put good quality support in place quickly for those who need it. This support is often provided by a specialist teacher and by well-trained teaching assistants.
- The school is taking determined steps to improve boys' writing. This includes many opportunities for outdoor learning, for example in the 'forest school' where pupils have lessons in a wooded

area of the school grounds. Activities such as building a den provide good opportunities for writing instructions, while camp fires give ideas for poetry and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, after watching a camp fire, some boys who were reluctant writers were motivated to write poems containing phrases such as 'charcoal black as night... sparks leaping out... flames flickering friendly from the fire... flames as hot as the bright red sun'.

- The revised scheme for teaching reading and spelling is helping many pupils who require a very structured approach to learning, but some teachers stick too closely to the scheme and do not consider how they might teach writing through other subjects. This means that writing skills are not always taught consistently across a range of subjects and some opportunities to improve boys' writing, in particular, are missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They say that behaviour is usually good and it is rare for any disruption to lessons to occur. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe and a large majority agree that behaviour is good.
- A small minority of parents and carers were concerned about the way bullying is dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and that related to discrimination. They say that very little bullying takes place and any that does occur is dealt with quickly and effectively by the adults.
- The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. This is seen especially during lunchtime where pupils sit talking quietly with their friends while they are served with food at the tables. Behaviour is outstanding at lunchtimes; the dining hall resembles a good quality restaurant full of groups of friends.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and use consistent strategies for ensuring good behaviour that are based securely upon praise. This ensures the good behaviour that is a key feature of all the good learning taking place.
- Pupils' consistently positive attitudes to learning are helping them to make faster progress. Pupils' ability to work together well in pairs or small groups contributes greatly to their learning in all subjects. Nevertheless, in a few lessons, one or two pupils occasionally misbehave which disrupts their learning.
- Attendance has improved in the last year due to the effective strategies in place to encourage parents and carers to make sure that pupils are in school. The Ark project contributes well to this by helping families who may be facing difficult circumstances to ensure their children come to school regularly. As a result there are few pupils with poor attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a very clear and ambitious vision of how the school can improve further and share this very effectively with all staff and governors.
- They check regularly on how good teaching is and provide high-quality training and support to improve it where necessary, for example by working alongside teachers and demonstrating good practice.
- The headteacher is making well-informed decisions about teachers rising up the salary scale on the basis of these checks on the effectiveness of their teaching.
- Younger teachers at the start of their career are supported very well and given many opportunities to learn from more experienced teachers.
- The curriculum is well planned to include opportunities that encourage pupils to be creative and imaginative, but it also includes very systematic and structured teaching of reading and mathematics. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development through activities such the 'forest school' or the many opportunities for outdoor activities on nearby Dartmoor or at coastal sites.

- The school takes all reasonable steps to make sure that pupils are safe. Good attention is given to child protection. Procedures are robust and firmly established, with up-to-date safeguarding and child-protection training for staff and governors.
- Rigorous systems are in place for recording and analysing information about how well individual pupils are doing. Leaders use this information well to check the progress of pupils, including those who join the school mid-term, and to identify those who need extra support. However, the systems for analysing data do not give quick and easy access to accurate information about how well the school compares with other schools.
- School leaders know exactly how well it is doing. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed well and the slight drop in standards of the previous few years has been tackled through well-targeted actions to improve the quality of teaching. This indicates a secure capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The effective governing body provides strong direction to the work of the school. Governors ask direct questions about how well pupils are learning and why. They ensure that pupil premium funds are used effectively. On visits to the school governors check the impact of this spending and hold the headteacher and senior staff to account for raising pupils' achievement.
 - The governing body has a clear plan to improve the building and equipment, including outdoor provision for the youngest children. The need to remove an unsuitable temporary building has held this up until very recently.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113323
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	401360

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Declan Keogh
Headteacher	Barbara Young
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 May 2010
Telephone number	01752 778796
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