

Wookey Primary School

Wells Road, Wookey, Somerset, BA5 1LQ

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Since the previous inspection, because of a period of significant staffing changes, efforts to establish consistently good teaching and pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 have been constrained.
- In particular, pupils' progress in writing has varied too much, limiting attainment. Steps taken to bring improvement have not been operating long enough to secure pupils' good achievement.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils of similar ability produce similar amounts of work. This is especially the case in English where boys do not always produce as much work as the girls.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills by applying them in extended writing tasks or to solve problems in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths:

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher, supported by his effective team of leaders and governors, have worked with determination through a difficult period of change to strive for improvement. This has resulted in rapidly improved teaching, which is now good. Consequently, pupils' achievement is now improving quickly.
- Parents and staff all say that they are able to recognise, and are pleased with, the improvements made at the school since the arrival of the headteacher. Pupils agree, one said 'he is the best we have ever had'.
- Teachers have improved pupils' understanding of what they have to achieve within lessons with the use of success statements. This has developed pupils' self-evaluation skills and is strengthening teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy many friendships. They enjoy their lessons and their attitudes towards learning are good. Pupils say that they feel happy and very safe at school, a sentiment shared by parents.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well because the provision is consistently good. This provides them with a good start to school life.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons, observing five teachers. These visits included observations of groups of pupils learning phonics (linking letters and sounds). The headteacher joined the inspector for a number of observations.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at examples of pupils' work to find out how well they learn, including the work of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for free school meals.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and the Local Leader of Education who represented the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement information and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to the online Parent View survey and the seven responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection. He also received two letters from parents and spoke to several others following the Key Stage 1 Nativity Play.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wookey is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.
- All other years are taught in mixed year group classes. Each class contain pupils from two consecutive years.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A privately run pre-school is based on the school site but is inspected separately.
- The school has experienced significant instability in teaching staff, including at senior level, since the previous inspection and staffing in three of the four classes has been subject to change during the past year.
- The current headteacher took up his post in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to good or better to increase pupils' achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide pupils, particularly boys, with clear guidance as to how much work they are expected to do within the lessons and outside the classroom
 - help pupils to apply their basic skills in both English and mathematics successfully, by providing them with regular opportunities to undertake mathematical problem solving and extended writing tasks
 - improve the consistency of marking in pupils' books, ensuring that next step comments are written clearly, so pupils are able to review and improve their work successfully
 - only accept work from pupils when it demonstrates the best standard and the highest quality presentation that they are able to do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2013, too many pupils' achievement and progress in Year 6, from their different starting points in Year 3, were below expectations, especially in writing. Attainment at the end of key Stages 1 and 2 was below average.
- Over time too few pupils have exceeded the expected rate of progress by the end of Key Stage 2. This has been more noticeable in writing. However, following the arrival of the headteacher, substantially increased expectations have been demanded and the quality of teaching has rapidly improved. This has resulted in improved progress and a scrutiny of current pupils' work in their books indicates that similarly good progress is now being made in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress made by boys is less than that made by girls. This is largely due to boys not being challenged enough by teachers to produce enough work. Often girls, of similar ability to the boys, produce more work and therefore typically make faster progress and attain higher standards.
- Efforts to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics have been more successful than in writing. However, more recent work this year, such as the introduction of 'Love to Write' books, where pupils write their unaided extended work, is helping to accelerate their progress in writing.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check exceeded the national average in both 2012 and 2013 and reflects the successful introduction of a phonics programme to support the teaching of reading and writing. This is impacting strongly within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with pupils' progress in reading improving. Pupils are very confident readers and are able to use the phonic sounds well. By the end of Year 2 attainment has improved and is now average. However, attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- When children join Reception their skills and knowledge are generally similar to what would normally be expected for their age. Pupils' ability varies widely between the different small cohorts. Children respond well to the good teaching and interesting learning activities they are given and make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school's records show that, for all groups, pupils' progress is similar and now strengthening, particularly in mathematics and writing. An increasing proportion of pupils are making more progress than they would normally be expected to make in English and mathematics.
- All staff promote equality of opportunity and include disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in all activities. Similarly the few pupils who are eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium receive effective additional support by highly effective teaching assistants. As a result, all these groups of pupils now make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is no gap in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently strong enough over time, constrained by significant staff changes, and therefore requires improvement. Consequently, teaching has not been good enough to help pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Even so, following the appointment of the headteacher during the last academic year, teaching has improved rapidly. The quality of teaching is now good, resulting in better progress being made by pupils across the school. However, this faster progress has not had enough time to redress the weaker achievement made by pupils in the past.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear learning intentions and support this with the 'toolkit', a checklist for pupils to use to check if they have been successful. However, teachers have not included how much work they require and often pupils of similar ability will produce markedly different amounts of work during the same period of time.

- In the best lessons, learning is good because teachers challenge pupils to apply their basic skills in English and mathematics regularly. Year 5 and 6 pupils were working by themselves solving mathematical problems using their understanding of fractions. Some had to revisit some previous calculations to secure their understanding but all made good progress. However, in discussion with the pupils and looking in the books, it was observed that often there is too much time being spent repeating basic skills, limiting their better progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, providing 'next steps' that tell the pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work. However, a consistent approach has not been adopted and individual teachers have adopted different practices, even between different subjects. Often the clarity of the next step comments does not provide pupils with enough information to be able to review and improve their work successfully. Teachers are also accepting poorly presented work from pupils, even though they are able to do better, without fully challenging them.
- Lessons are planned well to reflect the wide range of abilities that are in each class. Tasks that are provided for pupils reflect real life situations. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 were practising their use of persuasive writing by producing posters for the school Christmas Fair.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and ensures that children make good progress. Teachers make effective use of the outside and inside spaces, using resources well to promote children's development towards the early learning goals.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their children were taught well at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and pupils recognise that the school has undergone much change since the arrival of the headteacher and are quick to say how much they appreciate the work the staff have done to improve their school. 'It's changed so much' and 'it's fantastic now' were comments said to the inspector by parents.
- Pupils are proud of their school and attend regularly. They are happy and have positive attitudes to learning, especially when the work is engaging and challenging.
- Behaviour around the school is good and pupils demonstrate respect for each other, their teachers and other adults at the school. Older pupils are seen regularly supporting younger ones and joining in their games. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including emotional, physical and cyber bullying. Pupils and most parents report that behaviour is good and that staff would quickly address any occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour, rapidly resolving any problems pupils might have. Visits to the playground during the inspection confirmed that behaviour outside is good.
- In lessons behaviour is typically good. However, very occasionally some pupils become distracted, lose interest and display some inappropriate behaviour such as chatting to each other. This is usually because the work they are given to do is not demanding enough for the individual pupil, but any unacceptable behaviour is quickly identified and corrected by teachers.
- All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say they feel safe and very secure. Parents were satisfied about the way that the school cares for and looks after their children.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with visionary and expertly focused leadership. Along with other committed leaders and governors, he has ensured that there is a clear focus and determination to strive for continual improvement at the school and has secured rapid

improvements in teaching since his arrival, during a period of substantial staff changes. School self-evaluation is accurate and leaders know their school well.

- The morale of the staff is high and they are all committed to continual improvement. They share the headteacher's vision for the future of this school, securing its valued place within this village community. An example of this commitment was the excellent Key Stage 1 and Reception Class Nativity Play that took place, for the first time, in the village hall during the inspection.
 - Leaders understand the link between high quality teaching and high levels of achievement. They manage the performance of teachers well and ensure there is a good match between how well teachers are paid and how well pupils learn. Leaders make sure that teachers receive professional training and support, which meets their needs and supports the drive for improvement.
 - Pupils' progress is now assessed regularly and termly meetings are held to discuss the progress of all pupils with the class teacher. Leaders use this information to ensure that challenging targets are set for pupils and school performance is monitored effectively. Additional activities are provided to support targeted pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. These are monitored closely to ensure that the additional provision is effective.
 - The curriculum has been refreshed to include more visits and opportunities for pupils to be excited by the learning. This allows the school to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Residential visits, such as the Year 3 and 4 trip to Folly Farm, near Bristol, provided pupils with an opportunity to develop socially together.
 - The local authority has provided little support to the school. A Local Leader of Education has supported the school highly effectively. The link made between the two schools has supported the development of subject leaders well. Working in partnership with colleagues at the other school, they have drawn up appropriate plans to further improve pupils reading, writing and mathematical skills.
 - The school has taken the opportunity to use the primary sports funding to invest in a programme to develop sports within the school curriculum and sustain additional sports provision by increasing the capacity of staff to teach different sports to the pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school and has worked closely with the headteacher to drive rapid improvements. Governors understand how well pupils make progress and how well the pupils attain in national tests when compared with other schools nationally. They monitor the quality of teaching to check the effectiveness of teaching, and, supporting leaders, have successfully challenged weaker teaching. Governors understand the areas for development and work with the school to see the improvement plans through. They understand how each member of staff is paid according to their experience and performance. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium is allocated and its impact on improving levels of pupils' attainment. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory safeguarding requirements and is highly supportive of everyone there. Governors provide support and challenge to the school's leaders and benefit from training opportunities.
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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	123669
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	428891

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Henry
Headteacher	Andrew Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 March 2012
Telephone number	01749 673650
Fax number	01749 670186
Email address	office@wookey.somerset.sch.uk

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