

Wookey Primary School

Wells Road, Wookey, Somerset BA5 1LQ

Inspection dates

2–3 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong determination to identify and address the individual needs of pupils is reflected in all aspects of the school's work.
- The headteacher's effective work is supported well by committed staff and governors in realising the vision of sustaining improvement into the future.
- All pupils, including those with most ability, are increasingly encouraged and challenged to achieve their potential.
- The school has put right all the issues identified for improvement in the previous inspection. This is because senior leaders, including governors, have strengthened the way they check the work of the school to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Currently, pupils' learning and skills continue to improve rapidly.
- Teachers have improved the way they assess pupils' developing skills. They set work at the right level to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. They are underpinned by secure safeguarding procedures and high-quality care from staff who keep pupils safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are extremely supportive. These help them to feel confident and to respond with keen interest to the stimulating curriculum planned for them.
- Children make a successful start and achieve well during their year in Reception in response to good early years provision.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of pupils do not learn their basic number skills well enough to enable them to solve mathematical problems confidently.
- Children in Reception do not always have enough opportunities to extend their early writing skills when choosing their own activities.
- The capacity of some middle leaders to raise pupils' standards is constrained because they have not been in post long enough to develop their skills and use them fully across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - improving pupils' ability to recall number facts to lift their confidence and enable them to solve mathematical problems
 - providing more opportunities for children in Reception to enhance their early writing skills when undertaking their self-chosen learning activities.
- Strengthen middle leadership roles to support the sustained improvement of the school by fully developing their leadership skills and widening their involvement across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The well-respected headteacher has worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to enable colleagues to steer the school on a course of continued improvement.
- Staff morale is high: 'We are a committed team who willingly share our skills to do the best we can for the children in our care.' This is one of many positive comments from staff and governors about the strong leadership which underpins the work of the school.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the school's motto, 'To work hard and be respectful every day; to learn and grow together, that's the Wookey Way', underpins daily school routines and support pupils' good achievement. These values also sustain a culture where good teaching and pupils' behaviour thrive in all classes.
- The school develops good links with parents and other agencies including, for example, speech therapists and the adjacent pre-school. These strong partnerships advance pupils' progress, especially to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Leaders ensure that the additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Staff are innovative in providing interesting outdoor learning opportunities alongside extra adult support to ensure that disadvantaged pupils progress as well as their classmates.
- The headteacher works closely with senior colleagues to manage staff performance effectively so that teachers' pay progression and training are checked and lead to improved teaching and pupils' learning.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some more-established middle leaders are also effective in promoting good practice across the school: for example, in raising pupils' reading and writing skills and through more positive attitudes to learning in mathematics. However, some middle leaders are new to the school and have not developed the full capacity to raise standards yet. Currently, they are improving their skills by undertaking training and by sharing best practice with colleagues in this school and in other schools.
- Leaders and managers have improved the way they check the work of the school since the previous inspection. They have developed a focused tracking system to assess pupils' progress and this ensures that improvement plans are based on the right priorities. As a result, for example, teachers' marking of pupils' work has improved and this is helping pupils to contribute more effectively to their own learning.
- The school has developed a well-balanced and relevant curriculum, which successfully enthuses pupils to learn through stimulating experiences. Subjects are organised in a creative and imaginative way. Themes that cover several subjects, such as 'Anglo-Saxons', have a visible effect on pupils' attitudes to learning, encouraging them to be keen and interested in their work. Teachers use texts of favourite stories as one way of ensuring that pupils are enthused in learning and that content and skills are properly covered. Literacy skills are particularly well practised across themes and subjects.
- The school strongly promotes mutual respect and other values such as 'honesty' in assemblies. These are further developed in religious education lessons and also promote pupils' good understanding of British values and the diverse cultures that exist in modern Britain. The responsibilities that pupils take on in school also teach them effectively about democracy and life in modern Britain. For example, elected school councillors and school prefects represent and support their schoolmates diligently.
- The school uses the additional primary physical education and sport funding effectively. Leaders plan carefully, and have employed a specialist coach and significantly increased the range of sports clubs provided for pupils. This has increased pupils' skills and participation in sport, and enriched the skills of staff so they can sustain good practice into the future.
- The school is well-supported by the local authority, especially in developing new teachers. During the absence of the headteacher earlier this year, the local authority supported the actions taken by a senior teacher to sustain school improvement.

- The governance of the school
 - Guided by experienced leaders and aided by fresh expertise, governors have provided consistently good stewardship. Governors both support and challenge staff leaders effectively. This is evident in the pertinent questioning of senior staff evident in the comprehensive minutes of their meetings. By these means, for example, governors have helped to drive school improvement through a period of staff fluctuation.
 - Governors have strengthened the way they check the work of the school and have a secure knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, governors make frequent visits to observe pupils' learning and receive comprehensive evaluations of school performance from the headteacher. This enables them to understand and compare school information on pupils' achievement with that found nationally. Governors engage regularly in training opportunities, for example in safeguarding and managing finance, and fully meet their statutory obligations.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Adults in the school are fully trained in health and safety procedures and collaborate very effectively to provide high-quality care. Staff know pupils well and keep a close watch on those pupils considered to be vulnerable. Staff fully implement the school's well-considered safeguarding procedures to keep pupils safe. Parents say that they are happy their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Since the last inspection, existing and new leaders and teachers have sustained a determined and effective effort to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers now ensure that pupils know what they are learning in lessons, whether they are successful and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' learning is also noticeably enhanced by their excellent relationships, their willingness to share ideas and their increasing willingness to persevere with their work in class.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully by asking searching questions. In response, pupils pose their own questions and take more responsibility for their own learning. As a result, the encouraging atmosphere that this creates in all classes strongly underpins pupils' good and sometimes better progress. This includes, for example, disadvantaged pupils who often benefit from additional adult assistance and practical outdoor activities, which boost their self-confidence and readiness to learn.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers' planning takes into account the interests of pupils which engage them in their learning. Teachers also use displays effectively to stimulate pupils and to guide their thinking.
- Pupils in all classes are particularly responsive to the daily challenges and well-planned work presented to them. For example, pupils in the Years 2 and 3 class eagerly sought money problems for themselves and accurately completed them.
- Pupils told the inspector that they value the written guidance that teachers give them in their books. They also welcome the verbal advice, which they say 'helps us to understand what to do next to improve'. The way pupils are increasingly expressing their own ideas about how to improve their work and are responding to the teachers' marking are developing strengths. These are significantly helping to deepen pupils' understanding and quicken their progress, especially for the most-able pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has been strengthened in the early years and Key Stage 1 classes and is now good. This is helping pupils to develop their reading skills rapidly.
- Adults also encourage an enjoyment of books and pupils respond enthusiastically to the frequent opportunities to discuss and write about favourite story characters; they use their good breadth of vocabulary to express their ideas. For example, pupils in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class, stimulated by texts from Michael Morpurgo's story, *Kensuke's Kingdom*, wrote expressively about what it might be like to live on a desert island.
- Teachers and capable teaching assistants in all classes provide pupils with regular opportunities to strengthen and practise their skills across the curriculum. These are also helping pupils to learn more quickly. For example, pupils enjoy writing descriptively about the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons.
- Teaching assistants and additional adults are deployed well. Like the teachers, they show good skills and collaborate well to make best use of their expertise to assist pupils in their learning.

- Staff, aided by effective consultation with outside specialists, provide particularly effective support to individual pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils with very complex needs also benefit from excellent pastoral support, which enables them to participate and to make valued contributions to school activities.
- This year, in response to an improved focus on mathematics, pupils are developing their understanding more quickly than in the past and are filling gaps in their previous numeracy skills. At times though, the inability of some pupils to recall basic number facts quickly still weakens their confidence to tackle mathematical problems.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very courteous and welcoming towards visitors and are proud of their school. They demonstrate outstanding relationships with each other and with staff, which fully match the very positive pupils', parents' and staff's views expressed in questionnaires.
- The pupils specifically highlight the way staff take great care to keep them safe and happy. They like the way that staff and their parents respect each other.
- Members of the school council expressed their unreserved appreciation of the high quality of care they receive from adults. Older pupils talked with pride about how they follow the adults' example by helping to look after younger children at break times.
- Pupils show good understanding for the needs of others. They talk knowledgeably about values such as honesty, respect and kindness that they study in assemblies and during religious education lessons.
- Pupils also demonstrate a good awareness of the multicultural nature of modern Britain and of the values that everybody strives to share.
- Those pupils with responsibilities take them seriously: for example, as members of the school council organising fund-raising events, and as school prefects helping teachers during assemblies.
- Pupils know about the different forms that bullying might take: for example, cyber-bullying using computers, and physical and verbal abuse. They know how to stay safe and how to help each other to stay safe.
- When interviewed, pupils on the school council confidently stated, 'There is no bullying here because we are all friends.' They also said, 'Any squabbles are quickly and very fairly sorted out by the teachers.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School records show that this has been the case over time with some pupils with complex learning and behavioural needs being very sensitively and successfully supported.
- Sometimes, when responding to challenges in lessons, in Reception when learning outdoors, and in assemblies and during the breakfast club, pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes and most persevere well in their learning in lessons. Some pupils apply themselves very diligently and consistently, but at times a few pupils need and receive reminders from adults to give of their best.
- Pupils make confident reference to being taught e-safety and road safety at school. They said, 'Teachers are always willing to help us.'
- Pupils said they feel confident to come to school regularly. As a result, attendance has improved and now securely matches the national average.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the previous inspection, despite some continuing fluctuation in staffing, there has been a steady rise in the achievement of pupils throughout the school. Pupils' above-average attainment in reading and broadly average performance in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 earlier this year reflected good improvement in response to strengthened teaching.

- However, in the context of this school, nationally published data should be considered with care. This is because children's skills on entry and the proportion and depth of need among pupils with special educational needs within the very small cohorts vary considerably from year to year.
- School information and inspection observations of pupils' current work in books and learning in all classes show that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have shown rapid improvement. This is because pupils are learning well in response to good teaching, and are being enthused more by challenges that stimulate their thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Most pupils now demonstrate at least expected skills for their age and in all parts of the school are making faster progress than in the past. This is especially so in reading and writing, and increasingly in mathematics, from their differing starting points.
- Currently, as pupils eagerly apply themselves to their work, an increasing proportion of them are also working at higher than expected levels of skill, especially in speaking and listening. Standards are also rising well in reading, writing and more recently in mathematics.
- This is also particularly the case for most-able pupils, who respond well to teaching that stretches their thinking. For example, pupils in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class showed real determination when tackling their 'early morning mathematics challenges'.
- Phonics is taught effectively. This is supporting pupils' reading and writing well and is helping pupils to read confidently and to enjoy books. This was also evident as pupils read to the inspector and showed their proficiency at using the phonics skills they had been taught to tackle unfamiliar words and to read with increasing fluency.
- Pupils value the encouraging relationships forged with staff and in response to their high expectations strive to do their best. This is seen, for example, in the improved and good quality of pupils' handwriting. Pupils' positive attitudes and neatly presented work across the range of subjects are also testament to this, and show their improved readiness for the next stage of their education.
- In mathematics, most pupils are quickly filling past gaps in their skills and understanding, but a few lack the ability to recall number facts quickly enough and this is limiting their ability to solve mathematical problems.
- Throughout the school disadvantaged pupils learn well. They make the same good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as other pupils in the school in response to well-planned additional adult support. Currently, their progress is now quicker than other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils also attain the same levels of skill as their peers. Where this is not the case, it is because these pupils also have additional and in several cases complex needs. However, along with other disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, they make the same good progress, from their various starting points, as all other pupils in the school.

Early years provision

is good

- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Adults work well together and use regular observations to assess children's needs and to plan relevant activities. For example, the current focus on 'space' has captured the children's interest, is stimulating their imaginations and sustaining their strong engagement in learning.
- The number of children and their skills and learning needs vary widely from one year to the next on starting school in the combined Reception and Year 1 class. Over time, children's skills have been lower than typical for their age, particularly in their personal, language and communication skills.
- Currently, a much smaller and more-able group of children have settled well and are making rapid progress. This is because children benefit from consistently good teaching.
- The staff assess and record children's developing skills accurately. Children's learning journals contain clear evidence of their good progress in response to challenging and interesting activities.
- Adults strongly promote warm and supportive relationships, which help children to persevere with their activities.

- Children really enjoy bouncing ideas off each other and are immersed in their learning. Children use their imagination and curiosity to explore. For example, a group of children used rain-water gutters carefully to direct and control the force of water. They discussed and tested their ideas and made good progress in their communication, spatial and creative development.
- Children in the Reception and Year 1 class behave extremely well. Adults provide high-quality care to ensure that all the statutory welfare requirements are fully met and keep children safe. Consequently, the children feel very safe and, by following the consistently implemented routines, learn well how to keep themselves very safe.
- Children cooperate, understand the importance of good teamwork and grow in confidence within the calm and supportive atmosphere that underpins learning indoors and outside.
- Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning and welcome the close, constructive relationships with all the staff. This helps create a calm and happy environment in which to learn.
- Children develop their personal, social and emotional development very well. For example, children treat each other with respect when sharing resources such as modelling and painting materials.
- Children work and play equally well indoors and outside. They make good progress in developing their numeracy and literacy skills.
- At times, opportunities are missed for children to develop their early writing skills further when taking part in activities they have chosen for themselves.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been rising in recent years. Although slightly below average, children's levels of skill have represented good progress in relation to their differing starting points.
- In particular, the children's positive relationships and attitudes to school ensure their readiness to continue good learning into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	123669
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10002426

This inspection 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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Harrison
Headteacher	Andrew Marsh
Telephone number	01749 673650
Website	www.wookeyprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	office@wookey.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, including some with very complex needs, is above average and is high in some year groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- In some year groups a majority of the very few pupils supported by the pupil premium also have special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children experience early years provision on a full-time basis in a combined Reception and Year 1 class.
- The school provides its own breakfast club.
- A pre-school unit operates adjacent to the school site. It is managed privately and so was not part of this inspection.
- The school has experienced several changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons and saw the work of four teachers. He was accompanied by the headteacher during most of these visits.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils and specific groups of pupils about the school and their work. He listened to individual pupils read, attended two assemblies and observed pupils undertaking activities in the breakfast club. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body. He also held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. The inspector met with pupil members of the school council and met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in the 37 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, in nine staff questionnaires and in eight pupil questionnaires. He also gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school during the inspection.
- The inspector considered the school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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