



Watling Lower School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109499
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278209
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Raminder Arora LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bull Pond Lane
School category	Community		LU6 3BJ
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 662232
Number on roll	200	Fax number	01582 662232
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Andrew Foster
Date of previous inspection	20 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Ian Black

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 28 February 2006 - 1 March 2006	Inspection number 278209
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. Additionally, there is a Wrap Around Care unit on the school site. The children enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding which is below that found in children of a similar age, although in the past their attainment has been average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average and few pupils are learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection team and the school agree that Watling Lower provides a good education for its pupils. From a below average start, they reach standards which are above those expected by Year 2 and Year 4. This is because teaching is generally good. The pupils achieve well overall, although their progress varies across the school. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children get off to a sound start. They reach standards, which are below those expected by the end of Reception. Standards by the end of Year 2 are exceptional and have improved well over past years. The pupils' progress accelerates rapidly in Key Stage 1, especially in Year 2 where teaching is outstanding. Progress is not as rapid in Years 3 and 4, although the pupils' standards are above average. Weaknesses in the use of assessment in those years mean that staff do not draw on all the information available to plan for the pupils' needs. The school's self-evaluation is good and draws on a range of information. The priorities are appropriate and accurately support the school's effectiveness and improvement. Parents feel that school provides well for their children and pupils themselves support these views. Personal development of pupils is good. They are well cared for and enjoy their time at school. Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are good. The curriculum is good overall and the range and quality of extra curricular activities in and outside school are excellent. However, attendance is below average. Some pupils miss school because their parents take them on holiday during term time. The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is supported well by the governors and staff. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that the high standards achieved at the end of Year 2 are maintained through Years 3 and 4 and that full use is made of all assessment information in these year groups - improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage by ensuring that teaching better matches the needs of all children

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement and standards are good overall. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall. Children's standards in most areas are below those expected by the end of the Reception year. They perform better in mathematics and reading, where the introduction of pilot projects for early reading and numeracy, has had a positive effect on children's learning. Standards by the end of Year 2 in writing and mathematics are very high. They are above average in reading. Pupils' achievements are outstanding because the expectations are high, and the quality of teaching, particularly in Year 2, is outstanding. The pupils in Year 4 have made good progress compared with their previous attainment at the end of Year 2. The targets set for all

pupils are challenging and most manage to exceed these. The standards in English, mathematics and science are above the local authority averages and compare favourably with the average for similar schools by the end of Year 4. Pupils do less well in writing and effective measures are in place to improve this. Pupils' skills in mental calculations are good, as is their ability in problem solving and logical deduction. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress. This is as a result of a good number of well-qualified teaching assistants who are effectively deployed to meet their needs. Pupils identified as gifted and talented make equally good progress because of well-organised extra provision. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now satisfactory because of teachers' increased skills and subject knowledge.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school and have good relationships with their teachers and peers. Effective measures are in place to improve pupils' attendance, which is currently below average. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. A few older pupils find it difficult to conform, but with effective management, learning is not disrupted. Pupils know right from wrong and work well in teams. They enjoy learning and empathise with the feelings of others. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths and ways of life is well established. Pupils work safely. Their knowledge of road safety is good because they have been well involved in drawing up a travel plan. Pupils show excellent knowledge of how to develop healthy lifestyles. They participate in an impressive range of sports, eat healthily and know about the dangers of smoking. Their contribution to the community is outstanding. The school council is an excellent forum for pupils to express their views and pupils have raised significant amounts for local charities. Pupils are developing good reading and number skills for the future, but many do not take enough initiative in lessons to become independent learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to pupils making good progress over their time in school. Although most lessons observed during the inspection were judged as satisfactory, the additional evidence from other sources confirms that, teaching and learning are good overall. Good progress was evident in pupils' recorded work. Teachers assess pupils' performance thoroughly and set clear individual targets in English and mathematics. The quality of teachers' marking is good. It is regular and generally diagnostic, and this supports pupils' to improve their work. There is outstanding teaching in Year 2. A good range of questioning styles is used to keep all pupils enthusiastic and pupils are constantly assessed as to how well they are learning. In good lessons, pupils know what they are expected to learn and activities are well

matched to their needs. In a numeracy lesson, pupils were inspired by the teacher's secure command of the subject and rigour in learning. Most teachers know their pupils well and use firm but friendly control. Pupils work productively as a result. Teaching assistants provide a good quality support that enables learners to achieve well. The additional support provided in Year 2 this year has supported teaching very well and boosted pupils progress. In less effective lessons there was insufficient pupil participation, a lack of challenge, and too long spent on teacher talk. There are times when pupils are insufficiently encouraged to be independent and take greater responsibility for their own learning and application of skills learnt. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. There is good use of resources to stimulate children's interest and imagination. However, teaching is sometimes inconsistent because assessment of pupils' work is not always used well to inform planning and expectations are occasionally not high enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the statutory requirements. It is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Appropriate attention has been given to building links between subjects, for example, pupils learn about healthy living through physical education. Procedures for monitoring are secure. Most lessons promote the application of skills learnt in literacy, numeracy and ICT, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their independent learning skills. In Years 3 and 4, too long is sometimes spent on one subject, and the lessons are not always sufficiently structured to hold pupils' attention. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and experiences which pupils enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support of all pupils are good. Staff work extremely well as a team to look after pupils in their care. Pupils have adults to turn to if they feel sad or upset. They feel confident to give ideas and suggestions to staff. A few pupils say that they are worried about bullying. However, the school is working effectively to ensure pupils understand the meaning of bullying and it reacts very quickly to sort out authentic problems. Child protection and first aid procedures are good. The school has effective systems to ensure that risks are identified and resolved. Parents are confident that their children are in safe hands. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the very good number of well-deployed teaching assistants. Effective links with professionals ensure that individual pupils are given expert support. The school has tight procedures to track the academic progress of pupils, but this is not always used effectively to match work to individual needs in some lessons. The school is not yet making the most of this wealth of assessment data to ensure that pupils move seamlessly from Year 2, to the different challenges of Year 3.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and having a positive effect on raising achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and there is clearly a good ability to take the school forward further. The headteacher has led the school particularly effectively in the dramatic improvement in Year 2 test results. He is clear about other areas, which need to be developed, and pro-actively introducing effective strategies for further improvement. The school development plan is a very thorough document and contributes well to school evaluation. The school's self-evaluation correctly identifies where teaching is good or better, and rightly recognises the need to ensure all teaching is as good as the best. For instance, the satisfactory teaching in the Reception class is clearly identified as needing to be brought up to the quality of the rest by the senior management team. Appropriate strategies are being put in place to counteract this. Leaders and managers place a high priority on the care and support of all pupils and their inclusion in all activities. The deputy headteacher carries heavy responsibilities but contributes well to management. A common sense of purpose pervades the school and the staff work as a very effective team. The overwhelming majority of parents are very positive about the school. All available resources are well deployed. The decision to employ a high number of teaching assistants across all classes is having a positive effect on raising standards, especially in Year 2. The chair of governors is perceptive and clear about what the school needs to improve further. The rest of the governing body, although relatively, new are very committed and fully understand their role of holding the school to account.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us about it. Talking to you really helped us get to know your school well. We agree with you that your school looks after you well. You said you enjoy learning and like the range of clubs and activities available to you. The headteacher and all the staff work hard to make the school a better place. One of the things this inspection will do is to give them a clear picture of what is good in the school and what you all need to work at harder. One of the jobs ahead is to ensure that pupils in the Foundation Stage and those in Years 3 and 4 make as much progress as the pupils in Years 1 and 2. You also told us that you really enjoy coming to school. We would like you not to miss any school days so that your attendance improves. You and your parents think the school is good and improving and we agree with you. It is now up to you and your teachers to make it even better. We wish you success in making this happen and hope you enjoy the terms ahead.