



Widmer End Combined School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110335
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278410
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Margaret Goodchild AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Estcourt Drive
School category	Community		Widmer End
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		High Wycombe HP15 6AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 714371
Number on roll	206	Fax number	01494 717395
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lynn King
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Helen Perry

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school on the outskirts of High Wycombe. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is an additional language is below average. Although fewer pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals than in most schools, pupils come from varied social backgrounds. Children enter the Reception Year with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age. The school has had Investors in People status since 2000.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection findings support the school's judgement that this is a good school that provides good value for money. The vast majority of parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school's work and pupils take a pride in their school. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average, including in the Reception Year, where provision is good. They make good progress in their personal development and are well cared for. Teaching is good overall and occasionally outstanding, but teachers do not provide consistent challenge for the most able or provide as many opportunities as they could for pupils to develop their creativity.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and governing body have a clear vision and high expectations. The school has had staffing difficulties, especially in recruiting a new deputy head, but expects to resolve many of these in readiness for the Autumn term. In the meantime, the headteacher and acting deputy head are carrying too much responsibility. Senior managers are accurate in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school is thorough in identifying what can be done to improve. It has made good improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further. It is now ready to build on the many strengths that come from its traditional approach to provide a more vibrant and exciting learning experience for its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils are given work that consistently challenges them and develop further the learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, which is already good, particularly by increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity.
- Increase the contribution made by the key stage co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators to school improvement and self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above the national average. In the Reception year, children make good and, at times, outstanding progress so that nearly all reach and several exceed national expectations. In 2005, Year 2 pupils reached average standards overall, and in reading, writing and mathematics, though standards were slightly lower in writing than in the other areas. In Year 6, standards were above average overall, in mathematics and in science, and well above average in English, indicating that these pupils made good progress in Years 3 to 6.

Currently, standards throughout the school are above average in literacy and numeracy and average in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, meeting and sometimes exceeding challenging targets. Progress in ICT is satisfactory. In other subjects, their progress is

at least satisfactory and often good. There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils, although the most able pupils do not always achieve as much as they could in some lessons. The school has been working to good effect on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. Raising standards in writing and for the most able pupils are ongoing priorities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They have positive attitudes, behave well in lessons and around the school, and most have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. From the Reception year onwards, pupils work well together and want to achieve. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say that 'everyone at the school is really friendly' and that they enjoy school very much. Attendance is above average and the school is working well to improve it further.

Most pupils feel able to talk to an adult if they are worried about something and they understand the importance of making healthy choices. Pupils are active during breaks and lunchtime and many take advantage of the wide range of physical activities available. Pupils generally feel safe and secure and relate well with one another. They readily take responsibility around the school, in fundraising for charity, and take part in various musical performances at the local church. They contribute effectively to decision-making, for instance, providing the idea for a quiet area for infants in the playground. The good personal qualities that pupils develop and the good progress that they make in literacy and numeracy stand them in good stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding teaching in the Reception year. In the best lessons in Reception, the teacher has very high expectations and packs a vast amount of learning into the time available so that children make rapid progress. In the school as a whole, staff have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach, most lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers expect pupils to try their best. Teachers plan their lessons well overall, including matching work to the needs of different groups in the class, although they do not always challenge the most able pupils as much as they should. Teaching assistants are used well, and teachers are increasingly using the interactive whiteboards that have been provided in every classroom. Staff have good relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour well. In return, pupils are enthusiastic learners who respond readily and generally enjoy opportunities to exercise their independence. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities, however, for pupils to develop their creativity through learning that broadens their horizons in an exciting way.

Teachers regularly assess what pupils know and can do in English, mathematics and science, and the resulting information contributes well to pupils' achievement. The school has, rightly, identified the need to strengthen assessment in other subjects. Targets are set in literacy and numeracy for classes, groups and less frequently for individuals. Good systems are in place for identifying the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are learning English as an additional language. The school involves parents as active partners in their children's education and homework plays an important part in the progress that pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that are matched well to the needs of most pupils, including within the Reception Year. The school places particular emphasis on speaking and listening, which has led to a rise in standards in English, and is working effectively to increase opportunities for writing in a range of subjects. Overall, it promotes pupils' achievement in English and mathematics well and in ICT satisfactorily. A good range of additional programmes supports the learning of different groups of pupils. Some specific opportunities are provided for gifted and talented pupils, but more could be done to extend their learning. Personal social and health education and citizenship are planned well, and the school is working towards Healthy School status. The curriculum is enriched well through the use of visitors and visits, including residential experiences, and an exceptionally good range of extra-curricular is provided, with a particular emphasis on sport. All these activities are well attended and help to develop pupils' self-confidence and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Most parents are quick to praise the school in this respect and pupils feel that they are well cared for. The school is welcoming and has an outstanding family ethos. Health and safety routines and risk assessment are fully in place. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood, and staff have received training on how to deal with pupils who have experienced bereavement and crisis. The school has clear and fair systems for rewarding good behaviour and managing any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are especially enthusiastic about the reward system of 'golden time'. The school liaises closely with a range of other agencies to ensure good care and support for its pupils, but its anti-bullying policy does not provide sufficiently clear direction to staff about what actions to take should an incident of bullying occur. Pupils receive clear guidance about their personal development and teachers keep accurate and detailed records about their academic progress. They do not, however, always provide pupils with enough information on what they are expected to learn and what they could do in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides clear and focused leadership and sets high expectations. She has a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses because she is rigorous in checking on its effectiveness and in analysing data. There are strong systems in place that ensure the school runs smoothly from day to day. However, temporary staffing difficulties, many of which the school expects to resolve by the beginning of the Autumn term, mean that the headteacher and acting deputy head are shouldering too much responsibility. The school has been unable to appoint a new deputy with the particular skills it seeks and has a number of part-time teachers. The headteacher therefore receives only satisfactory support in evaluating the school's work and in school development, although all the staff have had good opportunities to increase their skills through training.

The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. The chair of governors has a very clear understanding of how the school could be improved and governors are closely involved in shaping its direction. The school is accurate in judging its effectiveness, and takes the views of parents and other stakeholders into account in its thorough planning for future development. It is satisfactorily staffed, well resourced and the accommodation meets pupils' needs well. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and there is a strong commitment to including all pupils as much as possible. The capacity for further improvement is, therefore, good.

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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	2	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	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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	2	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

Pupils

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit, and now I am writing to tell you about what we found.

This is a good school that is helping you to make good progress with your work so that you reach standards that are above those in most schools. This is because teaching is good, and we were particularly impressed by the teaching we saw in the Reception year. Some of you told us that you feel well cared for and we agree with you that the school provides good care and support. You have the chance to take part in a wide range of activities outside lesson time, especially in sport, and this helps you to make good progress in your personal development.

The school is led and managed well, and the headteacher and governors are keen to make the school even better. We have asked them to do this by making sure that: * teachers always give the most able pupils work that really challenges them; * some of the managers are able to contribute more to improving the school; * teachers provide you with better opportunities to develop your creativity so that school becomes even more exciting.

Yours faithfully

M Goodchild

Lead Inspector