



Wedmore First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123716
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281545
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Marshall AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Blackford Road
School category	Community		Wedmore
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Somerset BS28 4BS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01934 712643
Number on roll	242	Fax number	01934 713586
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Whitehead
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Ms Jackie Hipwell

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wedmore is an average sized first school. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with the expected levels for pupils the same age. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number of pupils have 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

This is a good school with outstanding features that provides an effective education for its pupils. The school and the parents agree with this view. Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and each other, and are provided with a high level of care and an extremely wide range of interesting activities. Consequently, children enjoy school, get on really well together and are especially good at understanding how to keep healthy and tackle any problems they may face.

The youngest children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, where provision is good. This ensures that the children settle quickly and achieve well. As they move through the school, all groups of pupils continue to do well, reaching above average standards by the time they leave. This is because teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned to support pupils' learning, whatever their needs. Most teachers plan lessons well, share targets with pupils and help them to know what they need to do next. However, this is not yet consistent practice in all lessons and in some instances teachers' marking is not helpful in showing pupils how to improve.

All leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They do not make full use of all available information, such as teacher assessments and tests, to make sure pupils achieve their very best. The improvements made in the school since the last inspection demonstrate clearly that it has a good capacity to make further progress and this is driven by the strong sense of teamwork and desire to improve that already exists. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise achievement through consistently sharing with pupils exactly what they need to do next in their learning to improve.
- Make even better use of assessment to check all pupils are doing their best.
- Ensure the quality of all teaching is consistently at the level of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, regardless of their background or learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well during their time at the school. There has been an improvement in pupils' performance over the previous year, particularly in Years 3 and 4. This improvement has been brought about by the school's hard work in raising the quality of teaching and learning for these pupils. Pupils are currently on track to meet the school's challenging targets.

Children's skills and knowledge as they enter school are in line with the levels expected for their age. They make good progress so that almost all are at least in line with national expectations by the start of Year 1 and many exceed them.

Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils achieve well and in 2005 by the end of Year 2 they had reached standards well above the national average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Current standards in writing at Year 2 are exceptionally high because it has been a continuing focus for the school. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 they have continued to make good progress to reach above average standards in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, with outstanding features. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and can explain extremely clearly just why they have healthy snacks and lunches, access to water and need exercise.

The school attaches a high priority to providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities, be part of the school community and cooperate with others. They know their views are taken seriously and through the school and 'green' councils their ideas make a real difference to school life. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning, and behaviour overall is good and at times excellent. For example, during playtimes, where behaviour is exemplary, pupils really understand how to play together sensibly and solve any problems that may arise.

Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behave safely. Good opportunities for cultural understanding are provided. However, some chances to increase pupils' spiritual awareness, particularly in collective acts of worship, can be missed and consequently this aspect is less well developed. A good foundation for pupils' future economic well-being is provided in a variety of ways such as ensuring that pupils achieve well and encouraging a range of fund-raising activities, although opportunities for them to take the initiative and manage their own projects are less well developed. Attendance is in line with the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Where teaching and learning are best, teachers use assessment well to plan challenging lessons, regularly share with pupils just what they need to do next to improve their work and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the concepts being taught. In these lessons pupils tell us 'the best bit about school is the work we do' . . . 'it's all great'!

Teachers are good at asking questions that encourage pupils to think about their learning and give reasons for their answers. All teachers plan interesting activities and are effective in encouraging pupils to become independent learners. In a few lessons, teachers do not make enough use of assessment and pupil targets to plan lessons.

The quality of marking is mostly good although occasionally it is not clear to pupils how they can improve their work.

Teaching assistants effectively support learning, whether it is within the classrooms, in small groups or leading additional activities such as in physical education. They are well-skilled and work closely with teachers to plan their work. All pupils enjoy lessons and behaviour is good, sometimes better, because they have excellent relationships with adults and find the work really interesting.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, well planned curriculum that is enriched exceptionally well. French lessons, a wealth of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities play a significant part in promoting pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Personal, social and health education very effectively supports pupils' overall development.

The curriculum develops pupils' basic skills well, particularly through the school's focus on developing writing. Opportunities to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy skills through writing in other subjects can sometimes still be missed. The school is working hard to make further improvements.

Children in the Foundation Stage, and increasingly in Year 1, are effectively encouraged to learn through first hand practical experiences and a good emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils' independence. The outdoor environment, although sometimes underutilised, is increasingly being used to support and extend pupils' learning further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with outstanding features. The school consistently reinforces pupils' personal development by means of highly effective systems such as 'grumble time'. Consequently, all pupils know exactly who to turn to if necessary and are extremely clear what they would do if they had any problem. They understand the consequences of their own and others' actions. This is a key factor in the excellent relationships pupils have both with adults and each other. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well understood and any pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported very well. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is very good and outside agencies and parents are involved effectively.

The school has introduced effective procedures to track pupils' progress more carefully through each year. Information gained is being used increasingly well by most teachers in order to provide pupils with challenging targets and when planning further work. Whilst marking is good overall, some teachers' marking is less effective than others. The school is aware of the need to develop more opportunities to involve pupils in checking how well they are doing and knowing the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are good and have successfully maintained and built upon the school's overall effectiveness since the last inspection. All leaders, staff, pupils and parents share the headteacher's clear vision of a school that is constantly striving to improve and where every child is important. There is a clear shared understanding of the school's overall effectiveness. The leaders know what is needed to take the school forward and have clearly demonstrated a good capacity to help the school improve further.

The work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is a strength of the school. They are well supported by senior staff. Through effective monitoring, they are tackling weaknesses, and this has raised pupil achievement in Years 3 and 4. The school's leaders are aware of the need to continue to develop and refine their skills in using information, such as results of tests and teachers' assessments, more regularly and thoroughly to ensure pupils continue to make good progress. Strong links, such as those developed with a local network of schools, have enabled the school to draw on external expertise and work together to improve areas such as writing.

The governing body is also contributing effectively to this success. Governors are caring, supportive and active in school. They are fully involved in all major decisions and fulfil their responsibilities well. The school regularly seeks and takes into account the views of parents and other stakeholders.

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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	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	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

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you like school and that the grown-ups are kind and look after you extremely well. We think that they are particularly good at helping you to know just what you have to do to keep healthy and what to do if you have any problems. We were happy to hear that there are plenty of things for you to enjoy at playtimes and lots of exciting things to take part in, such as the recycling projects, French lessons, art workshops and all your different clubs. We think you are polite to adults and each other and behave well around school, especially in the playground.

In order to make your learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to:

- make sure that teachers are helping you to know what you need to do to improve your work
- make sure you are always given lots of opportunities that stretch you to do your very best
- keep checking to make sure these things happen all the time.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.