



Wells Central CofE Junior School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 123777
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281556
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Huard AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Keward Avenue
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wells
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Somerset BA5 1TS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01749 678066
Number on roll	292	Fax number	01749 670598
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2004	Headteacher	Mr Steve Turner

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7 to 11	13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	281556

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized junior school. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year between average and above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wells Central is a satisfactory and improving school that provides a sound education for its pupils. At the last inspection the school was found to have serious weaknesses but good leadership from the headteacher has been the key to turning it round. He has introduced strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and encouraged the effective use of information from assessment to ensure that planning meets the diverse needs of pupils. As a result the achievement of the pupils is now satisfactory. There is an exciting and innovative curriculum, partly as a result of employing professionals to work with pupils in music, sport and the arts subjects. This has inspired pupils and greatly added to their enjoyment of school.

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative activities and problem solving, as well as regular exercise, all of which will stand them in good stead for the future. Pupils learn effectively in Years 5 and 6, where lessons are often lively and exciting, and marking tells them clearly how to improve their work. Although there is some good practice in Years 3 and 4, most lessons are not as inspiring. Pupils in these year groups do not get the same good guidance as to how to improve their work as is given in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are well looked after. They understand the need to stay safe and have numerous opportunities to take responsibility. They played a significant role in the appointment of the deputy headteacher: 'we thought about our questions and gave the school loads of advice so that the best person was chosen.'

The inspection confirms the school's own view of its effectiveness. Headteacher, staff and governors share a clear sense of direction and are committed to further improving the school. The governors provide considerable support and display a real understanding of the school and how well it is performing. They have been fully involved in the setting of challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests. Teachers with management responsibilities work hard. Literacy and numeracy leaders have been instrumental in using information from data to guide the planning for pupils in target groups so they can perform to their potential. However, other subject leaders have not yet had the opportunity to check on the quality of provision in the areas for which they are responsible. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good and the school provides satisfactory value for money and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 in order to raise standards and improve pupils' learning.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects and can contribute to improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Year 6 pupils entered the school having attained above-average standards at the end of Year 2, and the standards they are attaining now are also above average. Pupils underachieved in the past but this weakness has been eliminated and pupils are now reaching the standards that they should in English, mathematics and science. The pupils' work and school records show that pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4, and good progress in Years 5 and 6. The school has used assessment information well to analyse what needs to be done to enable more pupils to reach the levels they should. The focus on target groups to boost the attainment of pupils who are at risk of not fulfilling their full potential is having a positive effect on their achievement and pupils are making up lost ground in areas such as writing and number work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and make good progress against their targets. The school met the targets it set for English in 2005, but not those in mathematics. It looks to be well on course to meet the challenging targets set for this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and keenness to learn. As one parent commented, 'My daughter can't wait to get to school and doesn't stop talking about it when she gets home.' Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure, and know that staff have their best interests at heart. Pupils work together amicably, behave well and have a well-developed sense of fair play. They use their initiative and respond particularly well when given responsibility. The school council fulfils its role effectively and other pupils run clubs and organise school events. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for healthy eating and exercise. They are safety conscious, and the school council has worked with lunchtime supervisors to help to organise safe playground games. Pupils demonstrate social responsibility, for example, when making formal presentations to members of the local Civic Society about pollution. Pupils have good literacy and numeracy skills and this means they are well prepared for their future. Their abilities to work well in teams and to use their initiative are key assets which will serve them well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, and good in Years 5 and 6. This leads to some variation in pupils' progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, explain tasks clearly and develop good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are usually confident about tackling their work. All teachers manage

pupils' behaviour well and this is reflected in the positive working atmosphere. In lessons in Years 5 and 6, teachers know exactly when to intervene with well-judged questions or guidance and when to let pupils work things out for themselves. Too often in Years 3 and 4, the pace of learning slows because there is too much teacher talk and too little pupil activity. In addition, questions are not used effectively to probe pupils' understanding or to extend their thinking. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Marking is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6 it is good and clearly identifies what pupils need to do to make progress. In Years 3 and 4, although some marking is good, most does not give pupils enough guidance as to how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is exciting but also effective in ensuring that the needs of all children are met. There is a clear focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills. The school has made good progress in developing writing opportunities across a range of subjects, which has led to improvements in the quality of pupils' written work. However, this sort of planning is not yet in place for mathematics and some opportunities are missed to further improve pupils' numeracy skills. Innovative deployment of additional staffing has provided pupils with a wide variety of enriching experiences. For example, work with a resident artist has led to the creation of high quality artwork on display around the school. Pupils learn to lead healthy lives and to stay safe through a good programme for personal, social and health education, which incorporates use of drugs and sex education. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that is well attended by, and popular with, the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and this contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and all staff are conversant with them. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress are improving and as a result the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. A focus on mathematics investigations has led to an improvement in pupils' problem-solving skills. All pupils know and understand their targets and what they need to do to meet them. Older pupils appreciate the support they receive from teachers' marking. This tells them how they can improve and make progress. However, the quality of marking for the younger pupils is more inconsistent and they are not always clear about what they have to do to improve. Support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively meets their needs. Parents of these pupils are involved well in making decisions about their children's targets and supporting their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has provided the drive and rigour which have moved the school forward over the last two years. The school has taken appropriate action to remedy weaknesses in provision for mathematics and literacy and this has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Literacy and numeracy leaders have successfully led improvements in their subjects. Other subject leaders take their roles seriously but lack of opportunity for them to check on standards and teaching in their subjects limits their capacity to lead improvements. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and are very supportive of the school. They monitor the school's work closely and have a good understanding of their role in asking searching questions about how well it is doing. As a result they have a good picture of how well the school is performing and have the capacity to contribute to the improvements necessary to raise standards further.

The school has introduced a wide range of monitoring systems which identify strengths and weaknesses. Action taken as a result of the information gained is already having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Regular lesson observations are carried out by the senior leadership team, identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching. As a result, teaching in Years 3 and 4 has improved and shortcomings which made it unsatisfactory at the last inspection have been eliminated. However, more needs to be done to raise satisfactory teaching to good in Years 3 and 4. Regular questionnaires to parents and pupils help the school to involve them in planning for improvements. Action taken as a result include the provision of termly 'mini-reports' for parents, showing the current attainment of their children and giving individual targets for improvement.

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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?	3	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	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

16 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and would like to thank you for all the help that you gave us. We thought you would want to know what we thought about your school.

- You told us very clearly how much you enjoy school and that you learn a lot, and you also told us how much you relish the work you do with visiting artists and musicians.
- Most of you take very seriously the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good and this has helped many of you to make up some of the gaps in your earlier learning.
- The school takes good care of you and helps you become more confident.
- Your headteacher and the governors lead the school well and know what must be done to make it even better.

We have suggested two things for the school to work on now:

- Some of lessons in Years 3 and 4 could be a bit better to make sure that you make good progress right through the school.
- Teachers in charge of subjects need to keep a more careful check on how well those subjects are being taught.

We are glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

With very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead Inspector