

Wembdon St George's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123825
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	281571
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John English

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allan Cannell
Headteacher	David Hatrey
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2000
School address	Brantwood Road Wembdon Bridgwater TA6 7PS
Telephone number	01278 451726
Fax number	01278 446309

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school in a modern housing estate on the edge of Bridgwater. About half the pupils come from the local area, and the rest from the New Town estate in the north west of the town. Most of the pupils are White British, and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and the proportion eligible for free school meals are around the national average. The school has achieved Dyslexic Friendly Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Wembdon is an excellent school, with happy, thriving children who achieve well and whose personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent, and they treat each other with respect and courtesy. Bullying is rare. One young Reception child, when asked what she would do if she had a problem with another pupil behaving unkindly, said 'but they are all kind'. Perhaps more realistically, a Year 6 pupil accepted that occasionally bullying did happen, but he said 'but they (meaning the teachers) sort it out like that' and he snapped his fingers. Pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle, including enthusiastic participation in sports and exercise – a memorable part of the inspection was watching the whole school out in the playground putting their hearts into the daily 'wake and shake', a type of aerobics led by the equally enthusiastic and energetic teachers. Pupils also make an outstanding contribution to the organisation of their school, especially in the final two years, through active participation in a range of duties and activities that support younger pupils and members of the wider community, for example the elderly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They enjoy school, and have a good understanding of what the school is doing to prepare them for future economic well-being.

Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are below average, and make steady progress through the year so that they enter Year 1 with standards that have reached the average in most areas of learning. They then make good progress so that they leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are above average. The achievement of the pupils overall is good.

These outcomes are due to the exceptionally strong direction that the headteacher gives to the work of the school. His vision is for a school that constantly reviews its procedures and finds ways to improve whenever it is not doing as well as it should. Allied to this is a determination that every child should achieve as well as he or she can. All the staff share and support his vision. Governors provide exemplary support to the work of the school by ensuring that managers are held to account for the performance of the pupils. Overall, the leadership and management are outstanding. The senior managers rated the effectiveness of the school as good, and inspectors believe that they underrate themselves because they are intensely self-critical and have a strong drive to continual improvement. The school is outstandingly effective.

The teaching and learning are good. Typically, lessons are well prepared and delivered to the children, but in some of them there is an overemphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Although this enables the children to achieve well, it limits the extent to which they are challenged and pushed to develop their learning independently and creatively. The curriculum is outstanding. The wide range of activities, both in class and at other times, meets the needs of all the pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and stimulates and enthuses them. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Throughout the school, the care, guidance and support for the pupils are outstanding. Teachers monitor the performance of every child exceptionally carefully and target any at risk of underachieving. Comprehensive evidence shows how successful these interventions are, and how quickly most targeted pupils catch up with the others. Liaison with parents and professional agencies to support the learning of all children is also exemplary. The overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with the work of the school. A number in particular mentioned the way the school helped develop the confidence of their child. 'It is a very happy school' was also a typical comment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lessons in all the classes are presented in a way that helps the pupils to develop their independent learning and their creativity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards when the children enter the Foundation Stage class are below average, particularly in speaking, listening and reading. By the end of the stage, they have made good progress in those key areas, and have reached average standards in most areas of learning. At the end of Year 2, standards in 2006 were in line with the average overall, although they were above average in writing. These standards have been maintained by the current Year 2 class. In the 2006 Year 6 tests, standards of attainment were broadly in line with the average, which was lower than three of the preceding four years, when standards had been above average. This result was influenced by the unusually large number of pupils in the year group who joined the school recently, and whose progress was not as good as those who joined at the normal time. Evidence of the pupils' current levels of attainment shows that in Years 3 to 6, standards overall are above average. In all year groups, a very high proportion of pupils achieve challenging targets, showing clearly the good progress that they make. The achievement of the pupils overall is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk enthusiastically about the interesting things they do on visits and in the clubs they attend. They have a good attitude to work. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes is exemplary, and they have a clear understanding of how their behaviour affects other people. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are relaxed and friendly and are based on mutual respect. Pupils feel safe in school and know whom they can turn to if there is a problem, although they say this is rare. Pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6, make an outstanding contribution to the community by taking on many responsibilities within the school and within the wider community. They eat sensibly and exercise well. Attendance is in line with the national average and many of the absences are because, in spite of the school's best efforts to discourage them, a few parents take their children on holiday during term time. During the inspection, it was noted that there were very few absences.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons with a clear structure which provides a variety of activities to develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They tell the pupils what they are going to learn in the lesson, and often discuss in detail what they will need to do by the end of it to demonstrate that they have achieved their objective. This gives the pupils a sense of ownership of their learning and helps motivate them. The very good relationship between the teachers and the pupils makes a strong contribution to learning. As a result, lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils listen to the teacher and to each other, and

participate fully in all activities. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities get good support from their teachers and teaching assistants which helps them make good progress. Many lessons are presented in a creative and vibrant way which really enthuses the pupils, but others focus more on transmitting facts and skills and do not present the subjects in a way that challenges the pupils to develop their creativity and ability to work things out independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is constantly reviewed and improved, for example by developing appropriate cross-curricular themes and skills. Pupils have a rich and enjoyable experience of school, due to a wide range of interesting and motivating activities that are well matched to their needs. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is exemplary. There is outstanding provision for music, including extensive opportunities for the pupils to play musical instruments. French is offered on the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is excellent. It has contributed to the outstanding social and moral development of the pupils. There is a strong spiritual element to school life. Physical health features prominently. English and information and communication technology skills are used effectively to equip the pupils to achieve well in other subjects. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of valuable additional activities, including chess, gardening, orchestra and dance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of the pupils are outstanding. Staff place a very high priority on providing a safe environment for the pupils. Effective child protection and adult vetting procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements. Risk assessments, particularly of school visits, help to ensure pupils' safety.

The school has exceptionally good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and takes effective actions to ensure that all pupils achieve well. They constantly challenge pupils to do better and give them good advice on how to improve their work. They quickly identify pupils who need additional support, and work extremely well with parents and outside professionals to ensure that these pupils receive this support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides exceptionally clear direction to every area of the work of the school. He has the trust and confidence of parents, the staff and pupils. He combines sharply intelligent evaluation with the energy and creativity to find solutions wherever the performance of pupils, the staff or the organisation in general is not as good as he believes it should be. This self-reviewing attitude is shared by all the staff. As a result, the pupils' performance is carefully monitored and individuals at risk of underachievement are given additional support. The same approach is taken to improving teaching, the curriculum or any other important school activity. Staff are prepared to try out many initiatives to develop the curriculum and to improve standards, but they then monitor progress and only retain initiatives that are successful. Although many of the senior leaders are new to their roles, they are all longstanding teachers at the school,

and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of their roles in improving standards. Governors play a strong role in the management of the school. They have an exceptionally good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and they have the capacity to support and challenge its work. The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis, and finances are carefully managed to meet key priorities. The school has improved well since the last inspection, although some of the classrooms are still rather cramped. The school's capacity for future improvement is outstanding, and it offers exceptionally good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wembdon St George's C of E Primary School, Bridgwater, TA6 7PS

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and everyone was very welcoming and friendly. We liked talking to you about your school and looking at your work. We are pleased that you enjoy school and now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

Wembdon is an outstanding school and many things in your school are excellent:

- your behaviour is excellent in lessons and in the playground
- you work hard and make good progress because you are taught well and you are given lots of interesting work to do
- you look after each other very well and take very seriously the responsibilities adults give you. In particular, pupils in Years 5 and 6 do lots of excellent things around school to help everyone
- you know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy
- adults in the school look after you exceptionally well and make sure that your school is safe
- the school is extremely well run by your headteacher, teachers and governors.
- your headteacher is outstanding and makes sure that everyone is making as much progress as possible.

To help you learn better we have asked your teachers to give you even more opportunities in lessons to think things out for yourselves.

Best wishes and good luck to all of you in the future,

John English (Lead inspector)