



Wansdyke Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108986
Local Authority Bristol, City of
Inspection number 288240
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Shield

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Close
School category	Community		Whitchurch
Age range of pupils	4–11		Bristol BS14 0DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9030218
Number on roll (school)	177	Fax number	0117 9030219
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Angela Cook
		Headteacher	Cathy Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wansdyke Primary is smaller than most primary schools. On entry most children's language and social skills are average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is also average. While most pupils are of White British origin, a small number come from a range of minority heritages. The school has gone through a difficult period in which frequent staff changes have led to insecurity and discontinuity, now being successfully tackled by the headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wansdyke Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. It has some good aspects, but does not yet provide a consistently high quality of education. The vast majority of parents are delighted with the school. 'Thanks to all the staff for their extremely hard work.....both my children have received a fantastic start to their education' is typical of a number of comments received from parents.

The school has gone through an uncertain period, but the headteacher leads with clear vision, drive and determination to raise standards and provide a more consistently good quality of provision. Her analysis of what needs to be done is both accurate and insightful. The agenda for change has been rapid and much has been achieved, but the contribution of all staff to school improvement has been uneven. This is partly a result of staffing difficulties but also because the understanding of their leadership role is underdeveloped.

The school places considerable emphasis on ensuring good care and support for pupils, and this underpins their good personal development. Pupils' behaviour is thoughtful and considerate and they show a keen enthusiasm in class. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, and feel a real sense of belonging to the school community.

Well planned teaching in the Reception class ensures children get off to a good start. The school's encouragement of parents to spend time with their children as they settle in class each morning is a key factor in developing a good learning partnership. Achievement during Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average and better than this in some areas. Consistently good standards are achieved in reading and mathematics. Standards of writing are not as strong.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily but less well through Years 3 to 6. By the time pupils leave, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. As at the end of Year 2, standards of writing remain below those in reading, mathematics and science. This slows pupils' progress in subjects across the curriculum.

Teaching is satisfactory, although more effective in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 than higher up the school. This is because teaching of the younger pupils is more exciting and better planned to meet the needs of individual pupils. While much teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, it is not consistently so. To some extent, this is because the curriculum, while satisfactory, is not always planned to make meaningful and imaginative links between subjects. In addition, the feedback that pupils get, including marking, is not always effective in ensuring that they are set challenging targets for the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The school has a fresh sense of purpose, and comprehensive monitoring by the headteacher has ensured that its self-evaluation is realistic. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of writing in all years, and particularly in Years 3 to 6.

- Ensure that all lessons in Years 3 to 6 are exciting and challenging and that pupils get clear feedback on how well they are doing.
- Improve the curriculum to make it more exciting with relevant links across subjects.
- Develop the capacity of all staff to take responsibility for leading aspects of school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get off to a first-rate start in the Reception class, achieving well in all areas of their development. They are very well prepared by the time they start Year 1, meeting and sometimes exceeding expected levels. Achievement during Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average although there is some variation in different areas. Although results in national tests have varied from year to year, standards in reading and mathematics have consistently exceeded those in writing. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' lack of confidence in their writing affects progress in all subjects, which, although satisfactory, is not as consistent as it is lower down the school. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. However, in English, pupils do much better in reading than they do in writing. Standards fell in national tests in 2006, and, where there was some underachievement, the school has taken rigorous action to tackle the underlying issues. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their targets and achieve at least satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils work and play together well and good relationships amongst pupils are common. Attendance is satisfactory and steadily improving. Pupils are keen to do well and enthusiastically answer questions and participate in lessons. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe, report that there is little bullying, and confidently approach adults with any problems. The school is working towards the Healthy School Award and pupils are aware of healthy diets and the importance of regular exercise. Many older pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities to play in the school sports teams. They enjoy taking responsibility and are proud of their contribution, for example to improvements in the playground. This involved pupils in designing, surveying and costing the whole project. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They have a good sense of right and wrong. While pupils are aware of world religions, and have taken part in Indian dance and African drumming, many lack understanding of the cultural diversity of Britain. Pupils work together well in teams and are satisfactorily prepared for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Well designed and interestingly planned activities in the Reception class enable children to make good progress. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is often well suited to meet the needs of individual pupils with activities and tasks that interest and excite them. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support and help pupils. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also satisfactory, but has fewer good features. The pace of learning sometimes drops because the teacher talks too much and pupils are not given enough opportunity to learn by doing. Pupils themselves commented that they are sometimes bored when they sit on the carpet for too long. Marking and verbal feedback are not used well enough to let pupils know how to improve. There are examples of challenging teaching throughout the school, particularly in mathematics, which is often well organised and fun, but this is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

While the curriculum has some strengths it is often humdrum and fails to excite or make learning meaningful. In the Reception class, there is a good range of activities, well matched to the needs of the children. Outdoor provision, which extends their creative and physical skills, is particularly good. The school has begun a review of the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 and already some inventive ideas are capturing the pupils' interest and motivation. Older pupils confidently performed the Christmas production they had themselves scripted based on recent work about evacuation in the war. Such ideas are beginning to make effective links between subjects and promote more relevant learning, but opportunities for developing writing skills in all subjects are limited. Good opportunities for enrichment are provided through a good range of clubs – the conservation club is a particular favourite – and by visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A high priority is placed on pupils' care and welfare, and there is a strong culture of staff and pupils caring for one another. The school is rigorous with its safety and child protection checks. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by conscientious teaching assistants whose interventions are effective. Good links with outside agencies ensure the needs of these and other vulnerable pupils are well met. The school now has good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and checking that they are making the progress that they should. As a result, intervention is swift and effective when needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The vision and energy of the headteacher has been significant in bringing stability and a renewed sense of purpose. She is beginning to make the school's values real through the school's mission statement Learning side by side; rising from strength to strength. A change of culture is apparent in all aspects of the school's work and, as new initiatives begin to make an impact, improvement is tangible.

Leadership and management at other levels, however, are not consistently good. This is partly to do with recent long-term absences, but more importantly, there is a lack of understanding by all staff about their role and responsibilities in leading school improvement. As a result, too much falls to the headteacher to lead and manage. Planning, pupils' work and teaching are checked on regularly although the impact of this monitoring has yet to be fully felt. Governors are very supportive and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, through their own monitoring.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking about your work. Your school has many good features, and gives you a satisfactory standard of education.

What we liked most about your school

- You work hard and are keen to do your best. Your enthusiasm and excitement in some lessons were clear.
- You behave well and are friendly and polite to your teachers and each other.
- Good teaching in the Reception class gives you a good start.
- Your teachers look after you well and lessons are often interesting.
- You told us that you feel safe and that the school is a happy, friendly community.
- You get lots of opportunities to take part in clubs after school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve your skills in writing.
- Make sure that teachers check how well you are doing and let you know how to improve your work.
- Review what is taught to make it more exciting.
- Make sure that all staff understand how they can help to make the school even better.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. Good luck in the future!