



Walliscote Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109120
Local Authority North Somerset
Inspection number 288286
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Walliscote Road
School category	Community		Weston-super-Mare
Age range of pupils	4–11		BS23 1UY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01934 621954
Number on roll (school)	337	Fax number	01934 623612
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rachel Wiltshire
		Headteacher	Richard Larter
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2004		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006	Inspection number 288286
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Walliscote Primary School is a large primary school situated in the town centre of Weston-super-Mare. The school is in an enormous listed Victorian building with narrow corridors and stairways. It serves a less advantaged neighbourhood. There is a continual changeover of pupils within the school as pupils join and leave the school at times other than at the beginning of Reception and end of Year 6, creating a very high mobility rate. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and about a third of pupils are on the school's register for children with learning difficulties, which is well above average. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are exceptionally low for their age and most have weaknesses in their literacy and numeracy skills. There is a higher-than-average number of pupils with English as an additional language and over 15 different mother tongue languages are spoken.

The school has recently been awarded the 'Basic Skills Quality Mark 2006'.

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 and improving school. The headteacher is the driving force behind a wide range of improvements that have successfully raised standards and achievement since the last inspection. As a result of his outstanding leadership and management, a purposeful and stimulating environment has been created where children are eager to learn and staff are enthusiastic. He has instigated much rigour in the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Consequently, leadership and management at all levels are good and have a marked influence upon improving the quality of education and ensuring that the curriculum on offer is good. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in good and, at times, excellent teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement is good throughout the school and standards at the end of Year 6 are now better than at any time since before the last inspection. Taking account of the school's recent track record of development, its capacity to make further improvements is good.

Most children enter the Foundation Stage with exceptionally low standards but because of the good provision, they achieve well. Their good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and standards improve, but they are still well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading and writing are below average despite the teachers' concentrated efforts. Standards have improved in mathematics and science at a greater rate than in English and are now broadly average.

Pupils are very interested in their lessons especially when the teachers use the interactive whiteboards. They concentrate well, being willing to offer suggestions and to give answers. They demonstrate good attitudes towards each other and respond well to their teachers. However, some teachers do not vary their style of teaching enough to take account of the different ways pupils learn best and this restricts some pupils' progress, especially some of the potentially more able. Innovative ideas promote cross-subject links successfully, generating an excitement and relevance to pupils' learning. There is a greater need for the school to ensure that what is taught in English in each year group is also developed rigorously through other subjects so that reading and writing become an all-round focus for development. Effective care, support and guidance ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being are good, especially in adopting a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are fully included in all that the school does. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. As a result, attendance is improving and is now satisfactory. Behaviour has improved immensely and is now good. Children with little or no spoken English receive excellent care and support. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced effectively by many opportunities provided through visits, workshops and visitors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and in English in all year groups, especially for the more able pupils.
- Establish and check cross-subject links to ensure that what is taught in English in each year group is also developed rigorously through other subjects.

- Develop a wider range of teaching styles that match how pupils learn best and help pupils to understand how to improve their work and achieve more.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Nearly all children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are exceptionally low for their age. This is particularly so in numeracy, and in literacy most children have very limited speaking and listening skills. Children make good progress because the good quality of teaching provides a wide range of challenging and interesting things to do. By the time they enter Year 1, it is evident that there are still many children with significant weaknesses. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved but remain well below average.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English but in mathematics and science have improved at a better rate and are now average. This is a significant improvement. However, the proportion of more-able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is lower than the national average and this constrains whole-school performance. Pupils with English as an additional language make outstanding progress in the acquisition of English. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the well-structured support they receive. Pupils who join the different year groups through the year often arrive with no previous records of their achievements, but because of the effective support they are given they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good because of the effective care and support they are given. The building and the playground are very restricted for space but pupils manage themselves very well to ensure that they all stay safe. They all work and play together extremely well, showing great patience and support to friends who are in the early stages of learning English. Behaviour has improved immensely since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils organise playground games well to help form friendships. Where there are occasional incidents of hurtful attitudes towards others, these are soon resolved.

Attendance is now satisfactory and most pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. Their development of the arts is good and all pupils are very aware of the wide cultural diversity of their friends. With the school council and the help other pupils give around the school, the contribution pupils make to the school community is good. In preparation for their future, pupils finish their work neatly and achieve well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are enthusiastic and show positive attitudes which inspire pupils to be eager to learn and to enjoy their work. Planning is good and tasks build successfully upon pupils' previous learning. Care is taken to recap on what has been taught before and pupils are involved in assessing what they already know before the new topics are started. Different work is set for the different ability groups within the classes, although more-able pupils could be challenged further as not all teachers match their style of teaching to the way pupils learn best. For example, some teachers do not always combine more practical hands-on experiences and activities based upon listening with the visual methods they already use. Teachers extend pupils' knowledge effectively with use of the Internet to research information. For instance, the use of journalist video reports concentrated pupils' learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and the school has developed it well to match most of the needs of the pupils. Staff are very enthusiastic about the success of the meaningful links made between subjects because pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. However, there is not yet enough rigour to make sure that what is taught in English is featured strongly in other subjects. Recently introduced Spanish lessons have spurred on pupils' interest in another language and this is having a good effect upon pupils' understanding of letter sounds in Spanish as well as in English. The curriculum is enriched considerably with other activities such as visits and visitors. There are good links with other schools and outside agencies, enabling good development of sports skills, drugs awareness and sex education as part of the encouragement for pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All staff have good relationships with pupils and as a result pupils' personal development is growing extremely well. The school is a safe haven and all checks to ensure pupils' continued safety are made regularly. Everyone has focused effectively upon raising pupils' self-confidence and as a result the behaviour problems of the past have ceased. Records kept about each pupil's progress are good and are maintained frequently and thoroughly. Teachers use these records well to plan what they teach next. Marking of pupils' work is frequent and pupils respond well by correcting their work. One pupil said, 'Our teacher gives us good help' and this is certainly the view of most. Good support is also offered to parents and recently they responded well when reading was promoted with a 'Pyjama party for children' to encourage regular reading before bedtime. Excellent support is given to

pupils with English as an additional language and also to those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has excellent leadership and management skills. He very effectively readjusts his strategies as the school moves forward. He has worked most conscientiously with all staff and is given strong support from the staff, governors and particularly the deputy headteacher. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and shows a good understanding of strength and weaknesses, resulting in appropriate actions being planned to bring about further improvements. Leadership has created a calm, purposeful environment with a clear focus upon raising standards and improving pupils' personal development. Rigorous monitoring procedures to improve teaching and learning are very successful.

The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with successfully and as a result standards and achievement have improved significantly. The curriculum has recently been imaginatively adapted to provide meaningful links for pupils' learning and this has been promoted well by the leadership and management of the school to inspire staff and pupils alike. Throughout the school there is a buzz of enthusiasm amongst staff and pupils.

Subject leaders provide clear guidelines for the development of their subjects and these are having a good impact, especially in raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Leadership and management of the Foundation stage are good. The governing body is supportive and knowledgeable and governors are now beginning to be more active in their monitoring role; this gives them more opportunities to find out how well the school is developing.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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 making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We particularly liked the way you all get on together. We found your school to be a happy place. It is providing you with a good education. These are the things that are particularly good.

- The way your headteacher leads and manages your school is excellent.
- Your school has improved well since the last inspection and is now a good school.
- You are making good progress and your work is improving.
- The teaching is good. Your teachers plan interesting tasks for you so that you enjoy your learning.
- Your behaviour and the consideration you show for each other are good.
- The adults in your school care for you and support you extremely well. Even though your school is a good one, there are still some ways in which it could be even better. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to:
 - Improve your work, particularly in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and in English in all year groups, especially for the more able pupils.
 - Make sure that what you are being taught in English lessons is also taught thoroughly in other subjects.
 - Help you to make as much progress as you can, by ensuring that your teachers vary the ways they teach you to take account of how you learn best.