



Wellsmead Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110327
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 288634
Inspection date 22 January 2007
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hertford Place
School category	Community		Bletchley
Age range of pupils	4-7		Milton Keynes MK3 7HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 378291
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01908 375297
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Lisa Rodriguez
		Headteacher	Mrs Ann Green
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wellsmead is a small infant school serving an area of social and economic disadvantage. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. An above average proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to that of most schools.

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 some outstanding features. The pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. The caption, 'Reach for the stars', displayed in each class, very much reflects the school's commitment to the pupils' all round development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show caring attitudes and excellent behaviour. One parent rightly commented, 'Wellsmead is a small and personal school, all children look after each other and are very well mannered'. The outstanding and combined leadership of the headteacher and assistant headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, have secured good improvements since the school's last inspection. Although modest in some areas, the school's assessment of its effectiveness is very accurate.

Good teaching and stimulating activities in the Foundation Stage, enables Reception children to achieve well and reach the learning goals expected of five-year-olds. The teaching and curriculum in Years 1 and 2 continue to be good, enabling pupils to reach well above average standards in mathematics and above average writing standards. However, pupils' performance in reading has been comparatively weaker, as standards have been broadly average for many years. The school has successfully improved writing and mathematics but recognises that pupils do not read regularly or widely enough to reinforce their skills or to extend their vocabulary.

Teachers' planning provides a broad range of indoor and outdoor activities for pupils that stimulate their interest and enjoyment. This includes regular use of information and communication technology which prepares them well for the future. However, topics and links between subjects do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply and reinforce their reading, writing and mathematics, which slows their progress.

The pupils are extremely well cared for. They feel safe and trust that all adults are there to help them. Excellent use is made of assessment to help teachers plan work that is closely matched to the pupils' needs and abilities. Wellsmead is a healthy, clean and well maintained school. It deservedly achieved its healthy schools gold national award and regularly invites parents to have a healthy lunch with their children. The school is a focal part of the community, for example, proudly leading the West Bletchley carnival and inviting professionals from a local football club or an Olympic gymnast to work in school. Many of these activities are combined with charitable fund raising so pupils learn to value the contribution they make to the wider community. An excellent range of clubs, visits and visitors motivates the pupils. They learn about a range of cultures and customs that are different from their own and reflect on spiritual and moral themes in assemblies and celebrations of festivals from around the world.

Staff and governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be improved extremely well. The school has close links with other schools, colleges and organisations and, together with its excellent partnership with parents, is innovative and energetic in seeking to improve. The school's capacity to keep on improving is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on pupils' good writing skills to accelerate their progress in reading and raise standards.
- Provide more opportunities in all subjects and topics for pupils to use and reinforce their reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Reception children start school in the Foundation Stage with below average knowledge and skills. They are provided with stimulating activities so that, by the time they start Year 1, they reach the standards expected in all areas of learning. National tests results for seven-year-olds and pupils' work show that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress in relation to their starting points. In addition, pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress. Writing and mathematics standards have been consistently above or well above average over the last four years. However, reading standards have remained broadly average. The school sets challenging targets which the pupils meet but there are relative weaknesses in reading because pupils have too few opportunities to reinforce their skills. Consequently, their knowledge of words and vocabulary is limited which hampers the progress they make. Pupils do well in writing because letter sounds are taught very well with good opportunities provided for pupils to write independently. Mathematics standards are well above average because number skills are taught consistently well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They develop very good attitudes, behave extremely well and enjoy school, which is reflected in good attendance rates. Pupils find learning stimulating and this prepares them well for the future, as one Reception child said as he proudly showed off his first attempts at writing, 'Look that's my name and I can write my friend's name too'. Relationships are excellent and pupils say they feel safe because everyone is there to help each other, like the special playground friends, who are proud to look after younger pupils. Pupils understand that they can make a difference to the local and wider community through charitable fund raising and re-cycling projects. Pupils in the school council thrive on opportunities to represent the views of other pupils. The pupils reflect on the needs of others, particularly when they volunteer to plant flowers in the school's special memorial garden. Cultural diversity is celebrated in assemblies and through studies of different religions and customs. The pupils are fully aware of how to stay healthy and enjoy the many opportunities to take part in numerous sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some that is outstanding. Teachers plan tasks that are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. Lessons are usually fast paced and practical so that pupils are highly motivated. Reception children learn about the world and themselves because highly skilled staff provide a rich and well-balanced programme of activities. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as effectively supporting pupils in the early stages of learning English.

Teachers assess pupils' progress diligently and set accurate targets that guide pupils' learning. Lessons typically start with well-focused questions and class discussions followed up with well-chosen tasks that help to extend pupils' thinking. Teachers are good at checking on how well pupils have grasped key skills or concepts. However, there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to practise their reading skills or to explore words and new vocabulary, which hampers their progress in reading. Lessons are enhanced by the effective use of interactive white-boards and computers that help to focus pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that offers variety and is enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. The curriculum is having a very positive effect on the pupils' personal development. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good balance of indoor and outdoor learning experiences for Reception children. In Years 1 and 2 a very good range of educational visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning. Year 1 pupils enjoyed dressing up as Victorian children during their visit to a museum as part of their history work, helping them to appreciate the way people lived in past times. African drumming and special visits to the local church to perform a mock wedding provide practical experiences for the pupils. Information and communication technology is used well to support many aspects of the school's curriculum. The broad range of topics and activities benefit greatly the pupils' academic development. However, the pupils do not always have sustained opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills in all subjects to reinforce and accelerate their learning further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school's consideration for pupils' safety and well-being is central to all of its work. Personal and academic development are monitored thoroughly, and targets are set to help pupils improve further. Assessment and target setting take full account of the needs of pupils with learning

difficulties and disabilities as well as those who are very able, so that all pupils can achieve their best. Good support is provided for pupils learning English as an additional language, with clear learning targets set that enable them to do well and progress. There is a high level of care provided by a vigilant and committed staff team. Arrangements for child protection are strong and health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's support for pupils and families. Comments such as, 'My daughter's talks to me regularly about how I can help her to progress,' and, 'They (the staff) are a very dedicated team', are a good reflection of the views of parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school knows itself well and this is reflected in accurate self-evaluation. The headteacher and assistant headteacher demonstrate highly effective leadership and have earned the respect of the pupils, parents and staff. This strong leadership team has guided improvements to the school very well since the last inspection. There has been effective development in the teaching which has ensured that standards have improved. The management and use of assessment has improved very well, and this has helped to improve mathematics and writing standards significantly. However, the leadership team recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that reading standards consistently reach the same standards seen in writing and mathematics. Planning for improvement takes good account of the views of pupils, staff and parents. Governors hold the school to account well. Good systems are in place to ensure they monitor the school's performance. The staff work hard to ensure that parents are involved and kept informed about the school's achievements. The school's track record of improvement shows that it has good capacity to build on its strengths and to improve further.

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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?	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	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	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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?	2
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.

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	1
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 welcoming me to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and I enjoyed my day very much.

I agree with your parents that your school provides you with a good education.

There are many good things about your school and these are what pleased me most:-

- you are very well behaved and try very hard in lessons
- your teachers are helping you to do well and you learn to help other pupils
- you enjoy school and reach good standards, I think you are doing very well with your number work and writing especially
- your parents are very pleased with the school and like to help in school
- the staff take good care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy. Your school is very clean and you have healthy lunches
- your headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to give you extra things to do during and after school.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help you do better with your reading
- give you more chances to practise your reading, writing and mathematics work when you do special topics.

You can help as well by reading more books, both in school and at home.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector