

Wirksworth Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112653
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289364
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	60
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Johnson
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Rosser
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Harrison Drive Wirksworth Matlock Derbyshire DE4 4GZ
Telephone number	01629 822496
Fax number	01629 822496

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a smaller than average infant school in the mid-Derbyshire market town of Wirksworth. It has three classrooms and is federated to Wirksworth C of E Infant School close by. Pupils are representative of the local community and are of White British origin. Attainment on entry is broadly average and there is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher and governors have managed the school effectively through its early stages of federation with the other local infant school and after significant structural leadership changes. The majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, now make sound progress. Children get a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, their achievement overall in all subjects is satisfactory, although there are differences between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in literacy. Standards are above the local and national averages at the grades expected nationally but are well below average at the higher grades. The teaching is typically satisfactory - often with good features. The school does not enable the most capable pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils are not always appropriately challenged nor sufficiently focused on their targets. Many pupils are guided by thorough marking and feedback on their work, but this is not consistent across all classes. The school provides some good quality support to those pupils who have been identified as needing additional help in their learning. This has been aided by the much improved systems of assessment and tracking pupil progress.

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. They behave well, show mutual respect and are learning to care for others in the school. Continuity and progression across the school curriculum has not yet been adequately monitored and consequently there is some unnecessary repetition and consolidation for pupils who are ready to move on in their learning. Sometimes pupils are listening for too long and the use of support staff is not always wholly effective. The move towards more active learning in some subject areas has increased pupils' enjoyment. Much has been done to refurbish and reorganise the school building with positive effect.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, although the pastoral care of pupils is good. Pupils understand how to stay safe and are encouraged to share their feelings and concerns. They know how to keep healthy and there is an expectation that pupils will make sensible choices at mealtimes. Those who eat a school meal eat wisely, but this is not always the case for pupils with packed lunches. Pupils are learning to make a positive contribution to the school as a community. The 'Crunch Club' is a model of good practice, where representatives from each class help to make suggestions for improving the school. The school is very ably led by a motivational headteacher who, collectively with staff and governors, has a shared vision for the school and its improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall as the senior and subject leadership roles are relatively new and systems have not had time to embed. Governors have been wholly supportive but have only recently outlined their role in terms of monitoring and quality assurance. Where monitoring has begun in earnest, for example with the curriculum planning, more consistency has been achieved and improvements have been made which have begun to make a difference. The school has accurately evaluated itself and has an appropriate action plan with sensible and achievable priorities for development based on outcomes for children. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money. With its current leadership and direction, the school has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the numbers of children achieving higher levels, particularly in literacy, by ensuring that children are always aware of their targets and what they could do to improve.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school and that effective use is made of time in lessons.

- Develop subject leadership and embed the roles within the new leadership team. Ensure that there are rigorous systems of monitoring and quality assurance in place across the school, to include governors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils usually enter the school with expected knowledge and skills for their age, but this is variable with each cohort and sometimes entry data reveals that they come in with attainment well below what is expected. Staff working in the Foundation Stage use this information to tailor the programme to the needs of the group and all pupils are therefore making at least satisfactory progress, so that by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are broadly average.

In 2006, at Key Stage 1, attainment remained slightly above the national average overall. Pupils did better in reading and mathematics than in writing. Although the school has had good results for those pupils achieving the expected scores for their age, it is still not doing enough to challenge and extend pupils to reach higher levels, especially in reading and writing.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do less well in tests than other pupils, but their satisfactory progress is now very carefully monitored and some good quality support is in place. All staff are beginning to make much better use of assessment data to track pupils' progress and identify those in need of additional support earlier, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

Girls perform better than boys in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, but girls are currently underachieving in mathematics and science. The school is working hard to address aspects of gender differences in achievement through modification of teaching and the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and is a strength of this happy school, where attendance is around the national average. The school works hard to discourage the taking of family holidays during term time. Pupils enter the school confidently, which can be accredited to the warm welcome pupils receive, enabling them to settle quickly. Pupils are well behaved and expectations for this are made clear. They take responsibility for their own actions and are supportive of each other. The school is a caring environment with learners working and playing safely and with an understanding of keeping healthy. Every pupil eats a nutritious snack daily and knows to drink water regularly. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community and are keen participants in the 'Crunch Club'. Sometimes they are allowed to work independently, researching or undertaking scientific investigations. These activities are more enjoyable and are successful in developing a range of new skills, equipping them well for their future education and the workplace.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The school has worked hard to introduce more multiculturalism into the school since the last inspection and this has increased their understanding of other faiths and life in other countries. Pupils benefit from sharing experiences in themed assemblies and at 'circle time,' providing them time for contemplation. They have an excellent understanding of what is right and wrong. Their views are regularly consulted and taken seriously, as are those of their parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are mostly well planned and are of satisfactory quality, as teaching and learning are typically satisfactory, often with some good features. Teachers are beginning to take greater account of pupils' differing learning styles. In lessons where they are not listening for too long and where they are given precise instructions, pupils' enjoyment is increased. They especially enthuse about solving literacy and numeric problems whilst using the physical play equipment outside, and this type of activity is particularly appealing to boys.

Since the last inspection staff have completely updated assessment and tracking systems and now make better use of data to plan for pupils' needs, which is mainly effective. The challenges set are mainly suitable, but pupils are rarely clear about their targets. Staff do not always sufficiently account for those children who are potentially high attainers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Improvements have been made in the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) and computers are accessible in every classroom and in regular use. The school has given special emphasis to reading and writing across all groups of pupils and to addressing the necessity to improve results in these areas at higher levels. Staff have successfully increased opportunities for writing and the use of ICT in foundation subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Curriculum enrichment, such as the 'Turn takers Club,' has a very positive impact on harnessing pupils' interests and developing their skills. The school has reviewed its policy for monitoring the curriculum, but recognises there is more to do in this area to ensure this makes a difference to school improvement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. In the best lessons, staff use techniques to check on pupils' understanding, enabling them to reinforce learning appropriately. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its marking policy, but it is not yet consistent across the school. In some classes, staff inform pupils of what is good about their work and how they can improve. Pupils occasionally record what they have found hard. Sometimes pupils find tasks too easy, but have no effective strategies in place for checking their work.

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are adequately met. Pupils receive some good quality individual support in the classroom and, in Key Stage 1, through target groups for literacy and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for entry into the school and when they are ready to move onto the junior school, with which there are strong links.

Child protection procedures are understood and appropriately meet requirements. Pupils feel safe at the school and are developing a knowledge of who to turn to in case of difficulty. Incidences of bullying are very rare. Almost all parents are satisfied that the school is a happy and safe environment and that their child is well cared for and supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at the school are satisfactory overall. There is a team commitment to improving the school and doing the best for all pupils, ensuring that equality of opportunity is well promoted. The headteacher and governors have a genuine vision for the school and the federation of infant schools. They have successfully tackled several of the issues from the last inspection and some remain as work in progress and are ongoing, such as the monitoring of curriculum areas. Effective procedures are now in place for assessment and tracking pupils' progress but this is still at an early stage and needs embedding.

The leadership team and governors have together identified strengths and weaknesses through accurate self-evaluation. The school development plan is a working tool which is now updated to incorporate outcomes for children. The governing body has reviewed its cycle for monitoring and assessing, giving governors a purposeful and shared focus with clearer understanding of their role. However governor visits do not yet fully inform school improvement and influence the setting of challenging targets.

The leading and managing of curriculum areas has been reviewed since the last inspection, but roles are not yet fully embedded. The school has identified that some curriculum policies require updating to more effectively guide current practice. It also recognises that monitoring has been too informal and has not yet led to improving standards.

Under the steer of the new headteacher, the school is well placed to continue developing as a federated school.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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?	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?	3

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?	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	2
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

2 February 2007

The Pupils,

Wirksworth Infant School, Harrison Drive, Wirksworth, Derbyshire, DE4 4GZ

Thank you for being so friendly and making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

What I like most about your school:

- Your teachers and other adult helpers all care about each of you, make sure that you are safe and want you to do the best you can.
- You understand that it is important to come to school every day and your behaviour is good.
- All of you have a piece of fruit or a carrot for your mid morning break and drink lots of water. This helps you to keep healthy and to learn.
- You work sensibly in groups, helping each other and taking turns. Many of you have learnt to do this because you go to 'Turn takers Club.'
- You have put forward some good ideas for the school in 'Crunch Club' and the school takes your views seriously.
- You especially enjoy outdoor activities which help you in literacy and mathematics in a fun way.
- Teachers are now beginning to check your progress carefully.

These are the things I have asked the school to do:

- Make sure that all boys and girls get the best marks they can, especially those of you that learn quickly. Always tell you what your targets are and how you can make your work better.
- Make sure that all of your lessons are good, that your teachers make the best of all the time available and all of the other adult helpers in the classroom.
- Make sure that teachers check what you are learning in each subject and to see if you are learning enough. I have asked the school governors to also check that this happens on a regular basis.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector