

Widewell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113323
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	289582
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrea Carlisle
Headteacher	Barbara Young
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001
School address	Lulworth Drive Roborough Plymouth PL6 7ER
Telephone number	01752 778796
Fax number	01752 770962

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Widewell is an average-sized school. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage and come from a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. Because of the school's close proximity to an Armed Forces housing estate, there is a high level of mobility so that, typically, more than half of any Year 6 cohort has joined the school midway through or nearing the end of their primary education. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Widewell is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides a well-balanced education for its pupils that has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress because of the good leadership and management, good teaching and the positive working environment. The very high level of pupil mobility has had an impact on the school's overall standards, which are average in Year 6.

Achievement is good. Children enter the Reception Year with levels of attainment below those typically found. Although they make good progress because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, for a significant proportion, standards at the start of Year 1 remain below average. Good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6. Standards are only average at the end of Year 6, however, and this is because so many pupils come and go from the school. This means that many of the pupils take their Year 6 tests at other schools and pupils who join Widewell partway through their primary education have not always had the benefit of having made such good progress at their previous schools, or have a history of having attended a number of schools. All pupils now benefit from consistently good teaching; this has removed past fluctuations in pupils' rates of progress. Typically, lessons are lively and interesting and, as a result, pupils take part with real enthusiasm and become confident learners.

Pupils are provided with a good curriculum that includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities, a good emphasis on physical activities and the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. However, the school is aware of the need to improve provision for multi-cultural awareness. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance has steadily improved following the school's emphasis on the importance of regular attendance. Relationships are very good and play a key role in the outstanding progress pupils make in their personal development, including their exemplary behaviour. The provision for care, guidance and support is also outstanding. Staff care for the pupils very well and there is a very strong ethos of inclusion. Although academic guidance is good, better use could be made of the wide range of data obtained to track pupils' progress even more carefully as they move through the school.

The responses to the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, and several parents who visited the school especially to talk to inspectors praised the school highly, one parent commenting: 'Provision for my son has been excellent; the school has been very pro-active in their approach to his education'. The school has very effective systems to support newcomers; these pupils are made to feel very welcome so that they quickly settle in and do well at the school. The school works outstandingly well in partnership with others to promote pupils' progress and well-being, and links with the local community are similarly outstanding. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the assessment data obtained to track pupils' progress more carefully as they move through the school.
- Make better provision for multi-cultural awareness.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average. Provision for Reception children is consistently good and, as a result, children achieve well. Many reach the nationally expected goals for children of that age by the end of the Reception year, although overall standards remain below average. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6 as a result of consistently good teaching. Over half of the pupils currently in Year 6 began their primary education elsewhere and a significant number joined in Years 3 to 6. Pupils joining during a key stage make good progress from frequently low levels of attainment on entry because of the school's good induction procedures and support. Consequently, overall standards in Year 6 are average. More-able pupils have not always done as well as they should. However, the school is now providing appropriate challenge for these pupils through well-planned and challenging activities and early indications are that these changes have begun to filter through into higher levels in the Year 6 tests. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they benefit from very good support that is well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils at Widewell are independent and confident young people because they thrive within a supportive community that includes the community beyond the school gates. They are well known and encouraged by school staff, who act as excellent role models. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' social development is outstanding and, as a result, their behaviour is exceptionally good. However, the school accepts that preparation for life in multi-cultural Britain is less effective. Pupils contribute well to their community by fund raising and their attendance at a range of events. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their schooling. They speak highly of their teachers and attend school with increasing regularity. There are very few incidents of bullying and peer mediators help to sort out playground disputes. 'This makes you feel good about yourself,' said one mediator. Pupils have a voice through the school council and have had some success in effecting change. They keep fit and healthy by joining in a wide range of physical activities, including challenging residential trips, and have a detailed understanding of healthy lifestyles. They remember advice on keeping safe and as a result are less likely to take risks or misuse substances. Pupils work hard and acquire skills, including very good social skills, that will stand them in good stead in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Classrooms are welcoming places where pupils feel ready to learn. Lessons are typically lively and full of pace and challenge, so that pupils are motivated and learn well. Writing tasks are carefully chosen to appeal to boys as well as girls. Teachers work hard to ensure pupils understand basic mathematical and writing concepts. A judicious mix of support and assessment is provided for pupils joining the school partway through their education and this helps these pupils to quickly settle into the school and begin to make good progress.

Teachers organise teaching groups carefully so that all pupils get work at the right level to help them achieve as well as they can. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory but does not consistently

provide pupils with enough information about what they could do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from good support from teachers and teaching assistants so that they are helped to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The stimulating and challenging curriculum is highly effective in meeting the needs of groups and individuals, including those with learning difficulties or those identified as gifted and talented. The school makes excellent use of teachers' expertise so that every pupil learns a musical instrument, and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn German. Provision for sporting activities is outstanding, contributing significantly to pupils' fitness and outstanding enjoyment. After-school and lunchtime clubs are numerous and very well attended.

The curriculum is enriched significantly by contributions from the local community. Members of the emergency services encourage pupils to keep safe as part of personal, social and health education. Pupils are welcomed to the local church and service personnel have recently led a challenging overnight expedition for older pupils on the moors. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding, particularly for children of service personnel and their families. As one parent said: 'The school embraces the local community, which must be beneficial to all.' Outstanding systems are in place to ensure pupils are well cared for and safe. Very good support is given to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those looked after by the local authority and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has excellent procedures to mentor new pupils and help them and their families to settle in. Baseline assessment is used well to allocate these pupils to correct groups and set targets so that they begin to make good progress immediately. All pupils are given targets for English and mathematics and these are known by them and reviewed regularly. The school is in the process of transferring data about pupils' progress onto a 'tracking spreadsheet', but it is not yet in a readily accessible or useable form.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and set appropriate targets for its development, linked clearly to prioritised needs. They successfully promote the well-being of all pupils and the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. Resources are used well and the particularly good deployment of staff in Key Stage 2 to provide specialist teaching in physical education, music and German is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school is rightly proud of the recent improvement in national test results. Subject leaders manage their areas of responsibility well and, together with the effective use of external expertise, are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school takes very good account of the views of parents and other stakeholders. This is reflected in turn in the very positive view that parents have of the school.

Because school self-evaluation is rigorous and there is a track record of improvements in teaching, attendance, personal development and provision for care, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	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?	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	1
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

15 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Widewell Primary School, Plymouth PL6 7ER

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Widewell is a good school with some outstanding features. Your headteacher and staff care for you extremely well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you are well taught and that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, which you do exceptionally well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is outstanding and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

I have asked your school to do a couple of things to make it even better:

- Make better use of the information they have about the way each of you is progressing so that you can learn even better.
- Give you more opportunities to experience different cultures.

I am confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further.

I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis Lead Inspector