



Wentworth Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114933
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290080
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Viking Road
School category	Community		Maldon
Age range of pupils	4–11		Essex CM9 6JN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01621 853572
Number on roll (school)	428	Fax number	01621 857637
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Geoff Skewes
		Headteacher	Mrs Jan Myers
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. Attainment on entry is just below average.

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 leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. This, and effective support from other managers and governors, have been key features in significant school improvements. Rigorous self-evaluation systems enable the school to assess its performance accurately and prioritise the right areas for development. Nevertheless information about attainment on entry is not collated and kept with other information to ensure that progress is measured from each pupil's initial starting point. The headteacher's astute re-deployment of staff, playing to their strengths, maximises the impact of her decisions. She recognises that the next step is for managers to become more proactive and independent of her in leading school improvements. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of their school but remain dependent on the head teacher for problem solving and taking the school forward. A large majority of parents value the school highly. This is reflected in comments such as, 'I think Wentworth is a great school' and 'Every year he has gained more confidence'.

Teaching and the curriculum in Reception are good and the school has clear plans for the curriculum to be even better. Children make good progress because they settle quickly, activities are interesting and teachers ensure that they meet differing needs. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are included sensitively and effectively supported to make good progress. Teachers build on this good grounding and pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve well. After disappointing results in 2004 there was a year of steady improvement. Weaknesses in meeting the needs of potentially higher attaining pupils were identified in 2005, and challenging targets set, which resulted in significant and dramatic success in the number of pupils reaching higher levels both by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2006. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in the expected Level 4 and well above average in the higher Level 5. The school's tracking information indicates that these strengths in relation to reaching challenging targets are being maintained. This represents good achievement overall and very good achievement for higher attaining pupils, because children join the school with below expected communication skills for their age.

Teaching is good and ensures that learning proceeds systematically. This is because teachers make good use of detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress and routinely plan well to challenge different groups of pupils. The curriculum is good and becoming increasingly interesting as more links are made between subjects. Care, guidance and support in the school are outstanding and contribute to excellent behaviour and attitudes from pupils. Pupils feel completely safe and enjoy school enormously. There is much appreciation and excitement about special events, whether a pantomime visit or a future residential trip to France. Pupils relish the exceptional opportunities they have for taking responsibility. Attendance is good. Good academic progress means pupils are well prepared for future learning and economic well-being. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that managers extend their roles to initiate and lead change as the school develops.
- Ensure that information about attainment on entry and progress in the Reception class is included as the basis for tracking pupils' achievement in the rest of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the school is just below average because a significant minority of children enter with weaknesses in spoken English, affecting all areas of learning. Good teaching means that all children progress well and most reach expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year. At this stage there are still fewer pupils than usual exceeding expectations. Good teaching continues in Years 1 and 2. Consequently by the end of Year 2 standards have risen to a little above average, with a broadly average proportion reaching higher levels. Good teaching and learning continue from Years 3 to 6, so recent tests indicate that standards are above average by the end of Year 6 with an unusually high proportion of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement overall and very good achievement for higher attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Boys and girls of all abilities behave extremely well and safely in lessons and around school: pupils feel safe in school. They have excellent attitudes to challenge and enjoy learning. Attendance is above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies provide very good opportunities for reflection. Pupils have a deep understanding of a wide range of cultures and the diversity within their own society. They develop an unusually mature sense of responsibility towards each other, the school and the wider community through taking on various roles such as school council treasurer, a 'buddy' or peer mediator. Links between the oldest and youngest pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils often demonstrate impressive levels of confidence and concern for others by initiating activities to raise money for local and national charities.

While they develop the key skills needed for their future academic life well, their social development makes an exceptionally strong contribution to their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is very good and is used effectively to make decisions about what to teach. Typically, teaching is pacy and captures pupils' interest. As a result, they listen and concentrate very well. Occasional lapses from this high quality are caused when the pace is not quite so lively and, while satisfactory, a slower rate of learning results. Teachers are good at telling pupils why they need to acquire particular skills and knowledge. Clear targets are set that help pupils know when their learning is successful. This is a particularly strong feature in the case of those with learning difficulties and disabilities, for whom targets are helpfully presented on attractive and accessible cards. Teachers' marking is exceptionally good. It nearly always conveys ideas about how pupils can improve and the best examples use highlighters to indicate exactly where points are applicable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school teaches all the required subjects, and, in addition, French throughout the school. There is a strong programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils develop exceptionally mature attitudes to all aspects of school life and wider health and safety issues. Good links are made between subjects. The school has made a good start in planning links between subjects and the sequential development of skills. The use of outdoor space in the Foundation Stage is under review awaiting the development of a covered area. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the very wide range of clubs and visits, including residential visits for Years 5 and 6, and weeks and days with a specific focus, such as a science week and French day. Pupils' enthusiastic participation in the very good opportunities for regular exercise, including swimming in the school's own indoor pool, indicates that they are adopting a healthy life-style well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All guidelines about child protection and safeguarding are comprehensive, and followed extremely closely by all staff. Systems to promote and check academic and personal well-being are extensive, highly effective and unusually well understood and applied by all staff. These systems often involve pupils themselves. This contributes to their exceptionally mature approach to, what one parent described as, their 'brilliant school life'. In Year 6, marking of work includes comments about the accuracy with which pupils have carried out their own self-assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported very well; their achievements are frequently checked and updated, so they continue to

progress well. The use of external agencies is thorough and advice is followed carefully to powerful effect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides exceptionally skilled leadership. She is highly regarded by governors and staff, who work as an effective team sharing her sense of purpose. She has successfully steered the school through a period of considerable improvement. Important features of her success are the re-deployment of staff to use their strengths and increased accountability for all staff with responsibilities. As a result staff are managing their new areas of responsibility effectively, although they are not yet undertaking a full leadership role. Ensuring that all managers develop their leadership skills to initiate and promote continuing improvement is the next priority. Record keeping systems are managed well and tracking pupils' progress towards challenging targets is good. The analysis of information is very rigorous and contributing to significant improvements in standards and achievement. However, a system to ensure that information about progress in the Foundation Stage is held alongside records of progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not in place and so measuring full value added is less efficient than it might be. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly and accurately monitored. The school identifies the right areas for improvement, demonstrating highly effective self-evaluation. Governors know the school well and provide well balanced challenge and support. The school provides good value for money and has a very good capacity for further improvement.

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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	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	2
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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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

7 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Wentworth Primary, Viking Road, Maldon, Essex. CM9 6JN

Thank you very much for being so welcoming, polite and considerate when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. We agree with you and your parents and think you are fortunate to attend such a good school.

We were particularly impressed by your behaviour, the interest you show in lessons and the way you look after each other. Even when you were very excited about going to see 'Aladdin' you still behaved sensibly and respected your teachers and each other.

These are some of the best things about your school:

- You work hard and do well in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers and teaching assistants look after you extremely well so you feel very safe and this helps you learn well.
- Teachers set you interesting work that you enjoy a lot. They mark your work very carefully and this helps you to understand what you are doing well and what you need to do to be even better.
- There are masses of opportunities for you to take responsibility. You really enjoy this and often come up with really good ideas for helping other people.

Mrs Myers leads and manages the school extremely well. We know that you feel confident about sharing your ideas with her. Many things have improved recently in the school and are still improving, but we know that Mrs. Myers is keen for the school to be even better. Staff and governors give her plenty of help but we have asked them to take the lead on new developments more. Your teachers have good records about your work. However, we have asked them to keep your first records in Reception with your other records as you progress through the school. This will make it easier for them to see how well you are doing.

We hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, and wish you every success in the future.

Jill Bavin, Lead Inspector

John Paull and John Sangster