

North Waltham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115932
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290370
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	147
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Kent
Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Wheeler
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2002
School address	Church Road North Waltham Basingstoke RG25 2BL
Telephone number	01256 397344
Fax number	01256 397344

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an advantaged area. Most pupils come from one of three nearby villages, with about a fifth travelling from further afield. Almost all children have attended pre-school settings before starting in Reception and their attainment on entry is above average. The school is relatively small and means that pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The vast majority of pupils have a White British heritage and no pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is about average, six pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is more than usual for the size of the school. The school has gained Investors in People Status, the National Healthy Schools Award and the ICT Mark. It has also achieved the Football Association Charter Standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents rightly feel that their children receive an excellent all-round education. The sentiments expressed by one parent, who wrote, 'I feel very lucky that my child attends such a lovely school', are shared by the overwhelming majority. The atmosphere is happy and purposeful. Pupils' personal development is supported extremely well. As a result, they develop mature attitudes and their behaviour is generally excellent. They are enthusiastic and always ready to contribute ideas and take on responsibilities. Pupils make the right choices about eating sensibly and know the importance of exercise. They have a clear idea about how to stay safe in and outside school.

Achievement and standards are outstanding. The Foundation Stage provides children with an excellent start. Following a brief period where some teaching was weak, the quality of teaching is now consistently effective in Years 1 to 6. This, together with comprehensive individual feedback, means that pupils achieve extremely well through the school and reach exceptionally high standards by Year 6. More able pupils are suitably challenged and an excellent programme of support helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to make excellent progress towards their targets. The curriculum is rich and diverse, offering pupils many enjoyable and worthwhile opportunities to develop academically and personally. Pupils frequently practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons. Their use of information and communication technology (ICT) when studying in other subjects is not so well developed and the school has prioritised this.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy and subject managers. Governors support the school extremely well. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness. It is aware of its strengths and quick to identify where things could be further improved. As a result, all areas of its work are effective and excellent strategic planning, together with the school's track record of improvement, means that it has an excellent capacity to build on its current success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their learning in all subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

As children enter the school, their attainment is above that of typical five-year-olds. They build very well on this strong base and reach above average standards by the end of Reception. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There are occasional exceptions, such as last year, when about a third of pupils had learning difficulties and results dipped, particularly in writing. However, the school's excellent tracking records, confirmed by the inspection, show that pupils build well on their prior learning, whatever their starting points.

Pupils make excellent progress from Years 3 to 6. They reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties progress extremely well because of highly effective support. Those with a statement of special educational needs also achieve well, often reaching average standards despite their social or emotional problems. More able pupils

rise to the challenging targets set for them. In 2006, for example, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the higher levels was twice the national average in all three subjects. Pupils make particularly good headway in writing and achieve high standards due to skilled teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are happy, enjoy learning and get on very well with their teachers. Behaviour is generally excellent, although, when play areas are restricted because of bad weather, pupils can be over-boisterous. Pupils are adamant that no bullying takes place and say they feel safe in school. They are well aware of how to avoid hazards, such as when on outside visits and have a very good grasp of how to live healthily. Almost all pupils take part in at least one physical activity every week, in addition to physical education lessons. The girls' football club, for example, is very popular. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their concern for people in less fortunate circumstances than themselves is evident in their enthusiastic support of a school in Uganda. Cultural development is good, although pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in the UK is not as well grounded as their knowledge of cultural traditions in other countries. Older pupils readily take on tasks, such as leading lunch time activities or acting as 'Playground Pals'. Pupils' ability to work independently and cooperatively, together with their excellent literacy and numeracy skills, prepares them very well for their future education and subsequent economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers across the school make lessons interesting, which means pupils enjoy learning and achieve extremely well. Lessons are planned to cater for the needs of different abilities, and the well qualified and experienced teaching assistants play an important role in helping all pupils participate at their own level. Pupils have very good levels of independence and respond well to the many opportunities they have to reflect on their work. This self-evaluation is possible because teachers make success criteria clear. Pupils often look at one another's work, identifying good elements and what could be improved. Marking is a two-way process; teachers provide specific feedback and pupils indicate how difficult they found the work using a 'traffic light' system. This enables teachers to refine their planning for subsequent lessons. Expectations are high and work for the mixed age classes is often based on curriculum guidelines for the older pupils. The school's close monitoring of lessons identified some minor weaknesses in the teaching, such as lack of pace, but the inspection confirmed the school's view that teaching and learning are consistently effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a rich curriculum which supports their academic and personal development well; as one parent remarked, 'There is a great balance between learning, achievement and enjoyment'. Work in the Foundation Stage is organised imaginatively and pupils delight in learning through practical activities and play. A two-year cycle of topics helps to ensure progression through the mixed age classes. Literacy and numeracy work is planned extremely well and includes many different approaches in order to appeal to different pupils. Work in different subjects is often

linked, such as the current study of plants in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class where pupils are developing their writing and measuring skills within science work. The school has identified the need to extend opportunities for pupils to use computers more in their day-to-day studies. The local area is used to good effect, for example in history, when pupils study the school records and visit the neighbouring church.

Pupils' enjoyment and achievement is enhanced through residential visits and activities such as workshops on Shakespeare or the Victorians. Music adds a further dimension to pupils' learning. There is musical ensemble and professional musicians work with classes to develop performances. French adds additional breadth to the curriculum. A wide range of clubs promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils participate in many sporting competitions. These provide opportunities for them to hone their skills and develop a strong sense of sportsmanship, for which they have won two awards recently. Pupils produce work of high quality in the Art Club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from outstanding care, support and guidance. One parent expressed the views of the vast majority when commenting, 'My son was nurtured and guided beyond expectations and is now very happy'. Many praised the high level of commitment shown by staff in ensuring their children's welfare. Parents much appreciate the fact that children are greeted individually on most mornings by the headteacher.

A wide variety of programmes supports pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, those with behavioural problems, and the few who need help with social skills. A major strength is the excellent academic guidance pupils receive. Their progress is tracked meticulously to spot where extra support, encouragement, or further challenge is needed. Parents are successfully encouraged to support learning at home. For example, the systematic teaching of essential number facts, such as multiplication tables, owes much to parents helping their children through a progressive programme involving home/school mathematics cards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding due to the excellent vision and guidance of the headteacher and the exemplary way the deputy and subject managers fulfil their roles. The leadership team successfully leads the drive to sustain high standards. The school's processes for self-evaluation are first class and involve wide consultation with staff, parents and pupils. Governors play an important part in this by questioning decisions and monitoring outcomes. The strategic plan focuses on how effectively the school can build on its success and address any relative weaknesses, with a clear emphasis on pupils' welfare, academic achievement and personal development. The school's motto, 'Every Child Counts', is at the heart of its day-to-day life. As a result, equality of opportunity for pupils is outstanding.

The impact of highly effective leadership and management is evident from the excellent progress pupils make and the way in which emerging issues are tackled. For example, results in writing dipped a little in Year 2 last year, mostly due to the nature of the year group. However, this was not accepted complacently as the only possible reason and an extensive programme of training introduced teachers to new methods. Consequently, teachers' expertise increased and standards are back in line with previous years.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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	1

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?	1
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	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

23 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of North Waltham Primary School, Basingstoke, RG25 2BL

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit to your outstanding school.

Here are the things that I found best about it:

- you enjoy coming to school and behave very well
- you make excellent progress and reach high standards because teachers make lessons interesting and make sure you know what to do to improve
- you are looked after extremely well and everyone has the chance to succeed; it's clear that 'Every Child Counts', as the school motto says
- you have a really wide range of extra activities, such as visits and after-school clubs
- the school is very well run.

I found that the school could improve on the way you use computers. I believe that you could use your good ICT skills more frequently when working in other subjects.

I hope that you carry on enjoying school and doing such good work.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton Lead inspector