



Wellington Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 116745

Local Authority Herefordshire

Inspection number 290621

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006

Reporting inspector Patricia Pothecary

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wellington
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	4–11		HR4 8AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 830264
Number on roll (school)	139	Fax number	01432 830020
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Alison Adams
		Headteacher	G L McFarlane
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006	Inspection number 290621
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wellington is an average-sized rural primary school. All pupils are of White British origin. Pupils come from mixed backgrounds, with low to average levels of deprivation. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is low. Mobility of pupils is slightly higher than average overall, and is high in some year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Wellington is a happy and caring school with several strengths but it is not effective because it fails to help pupils do as well as they can. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress pupils make and in relation to the quality of teaching. Accordingly the school does not offer good value for money.

Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards and, through good teaching in Years 1 and 2, reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. This represents good progress and achievement for this age group. Although there is some good teaching in Years 3 to 6, too many lessons in English, science and particularly mathematics are inadequate and pupils lose ground, reaching only average standards by the time they leave the school. This represents unsatisfactory progress and achievement overall. This trend is being reversed, more pupils are making suitable progress and the school clearly demonstrates that it has the capacity to improve. Leadership and management are therefore satisfactory.

There have been significant and unavoidable staffing issues in the recent past which have contributed to the decline in standards and teaching but these are now resolved. However, many lessons are still not helping enough pupils to do their best and teaching remains unsatisfactory overall. In particular, teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons, so that all pupils build on what they have learned before, is not consistent enough. A programme for helping teachers improve their skills is underway and teaching is improving. The requirements from managers for how lessons should be planned and executed, however, are not yet explicit enough or well embedded in practice. This means that the evaluation of teaching lacks a well-established framework. Senior managers have begun to address the issues by putting into place a rigorous system for tracking the progress of each pupil towards challenging targets. Anyone falling behind is now quickly identified and helped. This means that care, guidance and support are good. Small classes and committed, caring staff also ensure that pupils are kept safe and those with learning difficulties make steady progress. Despite the difficulties, pupils enjoy what they do and their personal development and well-being is good, especially in the way that they contribute to the school and wider community. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is particularly strong in providing a wealth of interesting activities which help pupils stay healthy and grow into well-rounded young people who are responsible and enthusiastic about the things they do. As one parent explains, 'the school gives our children an all-round education and it plays a huge part in the whole village'.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve progress and achievement for all pupils aged 7 to 11 in English, science and particularly in mathematics
- improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils aged 7 to 11, especially in the way assessment is used to plan lessons
- make explicit the school's requirements for how lessons should be planned and delivered. Link this clearly to the evaluation of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Inadequate progress for leavers in 2006 was evident for almost all groups but it was particularly marked in boys' writing, where they failed to reach expected levels and were considerably behind the girls. Many of the most able pupils also failed to reach the expected higher levels in their tests for English, mathematics and science in 2006. Pupils with learning difficulties are doing better than the rest and consistently make satisfactory progress, largely because they receive effective support and guidance.

There is convincing evidence to show that this poor progress and achievement is reversing and more pupils now learn well and are beginning to catch up on lost ground. Improvements include good progress and achievement for pupils aged 5 to 7 in 2006 after a dip in the two previous years. Year 6 girls did better than boys for the first time in 2006. Pupils now also do well in information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, in this academic year, far more of the older pupils are on track to reach their predicted, and often quite challenging, targets, including many of the more able pupils. This results from improved teaching and better tracking and target setting by senior leaders.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enthusiastically take on positions of responsibility in school, such as librarian and prefect, running the school magazine as well as attending the school council. Pupils contribute well to the wider community, for example, giving concerts for elderly people and working with other local groups to support a school in Kenya. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of the values and beliefs of others is good overall. Pupils find the school 'a friendly place to come to'.

Pupils behave well and are very caring and considerate towards one another. Only where lessons lack pace and challenge do lapses in behaviour occur. Because pupils enjoy school, their attendance is good. As one parent explains, 'My children are happy and that means I am happy'. There is very little bullying and no exclusions. Pupils enjoy physical education and show a good understanding of how to eat and behave healthily.

Whilst their good social skills, good ICT skills, willingness to take on responsibility and experience with local businesses lay good foundations for their economic future, this

is compromised because they do not do as well as they might in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Despite being unsatisfactory overall, teaching is generally good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Reception. For pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the quality of teaching varies but does not secure enough progress in English, mathematics and science.

Teaching has improved in this academic year and more pupils are beginning to make expected progress. Some parents are aware of the variations in teaching quality, although most are pleased with their child's teaching and learning. Most lessons are lively and pupils enjoy many of the activities. Specialist teachers in subjects such as art and music engage pupils' imagination and add to their enjoyment of school. Pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 benefits from systematic planning and record-keeping. In Years 3 to 6 and in Reception, teachers sometimes teach the same thing to all pupils regardless of what they already know. In these lessons some pupils struggle, unless they are being supported, while others are restless because they are eager to move on. In these lessons, expectations are not high enough for the more able pupils.

Although precise pupil targets are provided for teachers and pupils, these are not used consistently well in assessing and planning lessons by some teachers. This means that improvements in pupils' progress are not yet secure. These variations in the quality and style of lesson planning indicate that new initiatives to improve teaching are not fully embedded.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There are many strengths to the curriculum, although it is no better than satisfactory. This is because the way the literacy, numeracy and science curricula are planned does not lead to consistently good teaching or good progress, which the school recognises and is beginning to improve. The school enriches the curriculum very well to broaden pupils' experiences and sustain their enthusiasm for learning. This includes French lessons, an exceptionally wide range of visits and activities, after-school and breakfast clubs and recent projects to extend the knowledge and skills of the most able pupils. Good links with other schools, as well as local groups and national initiatives, support this work well. Measures to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils, although still at an early stage, is having a positive impact, for example in improved reading skills in Year 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good procedures for safeguarding children and parents testify to 'extremely good support'. Staff know pupils very well and, with the help of a special 'Care Worker', successfully develop pupils' personal skills and self-confidence. In addition there is close liaison with other schools to aid a smooth transition when pupils join or leave the school. Pupils' progress in the core subjects is now tracked very thoroughly by senior managers and challenging targets set, based upon what they have learned before. These are shared with parents, pupils and teachers so that everyone is clear about what needs to be done. To make sure that no pupil is left behind, the figures are monitored each half term and support provided. This has resulted in improved progress and pupils' greater involvement in their learning. The use of these targets by individual teachers to plan lessons, although developing, is not yet consistent enough to improve progress for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although progress and achievement are inadequate, there is convincing evidence of the school's capacity to improve. Several well-thought-through initiatives have had a beneficial impact. The progress of pupils aged 7 to 11 is much better recently and many more pupils are on track to meet or exceed their targets. Self-evaluation by managers and governors is rigorous, with careful monitoring of how well different groups of pupils are doing and regular checks on how well improvements in teaching are developing. In view of these improvements, and the breadth of educational experiences provided, equality of opportunity for pupils is now satisfactory. The local authority is involved well, through a special intervention programme, and the view of parents and pupils are taken into account.

The implementation of recent teaching and learning initiatives, although improving lessons, is not yet sufficiently consistent or effective. This is partly because expectations about lesson planning and delivery are not made explicit and so teachers' work is not always evaluated using clearly understood criteria. With so many teachers new to the school or to their year groups, this is particularly problematic. Plans are already in place to rectify this shortcoming.

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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?	4
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	2

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?	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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we visited your school. We can see why you enjoy all the interesting things that you do. It was a pleasure meeting those of you in the school council and joining you for some of your lessons. We found your school to be happy, caring and clearly improving, although it is not yet good enough because the progress many of you make is still too slow. Those of you aged 5 to 7 are making good progress, but for those of you aged 7 to 11, the way you are taught and the progress you make in English, mathematics and science is not yet as good as it should be. It has become a lot better recently and we are confident that the improvements will continue, especially with the good attitudes that you have to your work. You showed us how sensible, well-behaved and hard working you are. Your teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard to make lessons more effective so that you are beginning to learn more. We have asked them to make sure that each one of you is taught well and to see that you reach higher standards in your work.

We were pleased to see how well you develop personally, that you try to keep healthy through exercise and sensible eating and we were impressed with how much responsibility you take around the school and in the local community. You all become more confident and mature during your time at the school, working well together in teams, which will help you in the future. We found a good range of activities and subjects, which help you learn and improve many of your skills. The school is also good at keeping you safe, and sets good targets to guide you well in what to learn. You play a big part in this.

School leaders and governors do a satisfactory job in seeing that the school gets better and better. We have asked them to set clearer instructions for how lessons are planned and run to improve teaching further.

Good luck in helping the school with our suggestions for improvement. We wish you all the very best in the future,