



Wootton Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118172
Local Authority Isle of Wight
Inspection number 291040
Inspection dates 22–23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Community		Wootton Bridge
Age range of pupils	4–9		Ryde PO33 4PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983 882505
Number on roll (school)	130	Fax number	01983 882505
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Johnson
		Headteacher	Mrs P East
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2002		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 22–23 January 2007	Inspection number 291040
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average, reflecting the mixed social and economic make-up of the locality. Predominantly White British, there are few pupils from ethnic minority groups and no pupils whose home language is not English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average, and there are two pupils with statements of special educational need. There has been some high teacher turnover in recent times. The school has the Healthy School and Basic Skill Awards, and has been recognised as an Investors in People organisation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are correct in their view that this school provides a good standard of education. There is a shared vision of, and commitment to, high quality in all areas of the school's work. Consequently, pupils achieve well and attain above average academic standards whilst also benefiting from good personal development, care, support and guidance. Unsurprisingly, one parent wrote, 'My children always go to school happy and come home tired...but still happy'.

Children enter the good Reception class with the knowledge and skills expected of their age. They make good progress although, upon entry to Year 1, writing is a weaker element. By the end of Year 4 pupils have continued to achieve well and attain above average standards. This is the consequence of positive pupil attitudes and good teaching. Some inconsistencies exist in the degree to which teachers challenge pupils' thinking.

Pupils behave well and say they are happy at school. They speak confidently and enthusiastically about their teachers, and the range of different activities they experience. Most like sport and visits, such as the residential stay for Year 4 pupils. They benefit from some excellent links with the community, and some outstanding initiatives designed to promote their safety.

The recent changes to the good curriculum have had an important impact on pupils' motivation and their learning. One parent wrote, 'The excellent curriculum and topic work gives plenty of opportunities for families and the community to participate'. Activities such as 'Discovery Week' allow pupils to learn effectively, in a practical way, about photography and design technology. There are appropriate plans to further extend pupils' opportunities to solve problems.

Such successes have resulted from good leadership and management. The very competent headteacher has helped to establish a very clear direction for the school's development. This is firmly based upon widely agreed values, effective teamwork and the involvement of an increasing number of staff in monitoring the school. Some middle managers have insufficient knowledge and experience to fully maximise their role in evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement. The solid improvement since the last inspection, particularly in information and communication technology, together with the increasing experience of governors and senior managers reinforces the judgement that there is a good capacity to improve this school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers promote the higher thinking skills of pupils, particularly the more able, and encourage them to raise questions and solve problems.
- Ensure that all managers have more opportunities to extend their knowledge and experience of monitoring, evaluation and development planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge typical for their age, although many have an insecure knowledge of how to link sounds and letters. Good teaching contributes to the children achieving well, and most meet or exceed the goals expected of them by the end of Reception.

End of Year 2 teacher assessments in 2006 showed a dip in performance from the above average standards of previous years. These pupils had experienced significant changes in their teachers but still achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. School analysis correctly identified the need to further challenge more able writers and mathematicians. It has introduced group work for the more able in these subjects, and there has been a whole-school focus on writing. Observations and school data indicate that there is now a return to above average standards and good achievement across the school.

Good support work by the learning support assistants contributes to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities making good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good, with some significant strengths. Pupils behave well, are polite and well-mannered. Above average attendance is reflected in a parent's observation that 'our son is very happy and looks forward to going in, even on Mondays!' Pupils' good personal development results not only from positive attitudes, but also from the good range of opportunities pupils have to extend their knowledge, for example, about healthy living. Their environmental knowledge is extended by the garden design project, but pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in more practical environmental projects. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe, including 'kerb-craft' and road safety. Good attention to detail is evident when the school arranged for parents and pupils to be made aware, in a practical way, about new in-car, child safety seat rules. The community support for such messages is just one example of the how some outstanding community links benefit pupils in a very practical way. This small school has developed very good links with local schools and churches, the local business community, and pupils have been actively involved in campaigning for the development of a village square. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is good. Particularly effective are the good opportunities for pupils to reflect and imagine the feelings of others, such as when role-playing evacuee children during the Second World War. Pupils are well prepared for their future as a result of good activities, such as when they consider costs and profit when selling cakes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistent monitoring helps to deliver good levels of teaching and learning. Teachers plan well and, consequently, lessons are well organised, time is used well and pupils benefit from a good mix of activities. Pupils know what they have to do, are quickly on task and make good use of some well-prepared resources. Effective pupil management skills contribute to good relationships and pupils are eager to get involved. They know and react well to the teachers' high expectations of conduct and work, and benefit from some good marking. Whilst teachers are now promoting different ways to learn through the 'thinking hats' approach, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of challenge in some lessons. Pupils, particularly the more able, have insufficient opportunities to raise questions themselves, and answer more challenging questions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has recently been reviewed and is good. Its strength lies in meeting the different learning styles of pupils. Topic work on Russia, for example, involved pupils in practical role-play about flying, writing their own folk story, designing Russian dolls and a science investigation about how to stay warm. Parents praise the opportunities they have to work alongside their children. The successful 'Chinese Week' bears witness to the great impact of this, with families designing and making their own dragons. The school hall is bedecked with a colourful and impressive display of three dimensional figures. Additionally, the curriculum uses the locality well. Pupils visit the old village school and role-play the feelings and experience of being evacuated and given a 'new' family during wartime. They speak of it movingly. To meet the needs of the more able the school has introduced more opportunities for problem-solving and investigating, but it realises the need to further develop these strategies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school knows its pupils well and is proactive in identifying their needs. It has a good range of support systems to meet both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. They know the adults are there to help them, and are prepared to approach them with any problems. In this supportive environment pupils are able to concentrate on their work and their personal and academic development is well encouraged. One parent accurately observed that, 'my son is thriving in the environment provided, and there is a great family atmosphere'. Care does not stop at the school gate. A wide range of external agencies are used well to support pupils and their families. Pupils' safety is further reinforced by effective child protection and health and safety procedures.

Pupils have appropriate literacy and numeracy targets. Not all know them because of inconsistencies in the extent to which targets are referred to during lessons. Some parents are correct in their view that the personal targets for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities could be more 'pupil-friendly'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The relatively new headteacher and her deputy have set a clear vision for the school and have effectively shared this with a wide range of people. Staff work as a team, and are successful in fulfilling the school's vision of pupils learning effectively in a 'challenging, secure and happy environment'. The school is not complacent and there is a realistic and well researched plan for whole school development. Monitoring and evaluation systems are embedded. One immediate area of impact has been in the recent development of a tracking system which enables the school to identify more effectively those pupils requiring additional support. The self-evaluation of the school is generally accurate, although in some areas such as personal development and well-being the school underestimates the impact of its actions.

Good leadership has been effective in extending management opportunities for staff. These managers are now more involved in work-scrutiny, evaluating the performance of their areas, and planning new initiatives. One result in literacy has been an emphasis on improving pupils' understanding of what is high quality work through drafting and correcting written work. More able writers are inspired to use a wider range of vocabulary through their experience of being in a 'snow cave'. However not all managers have sufficient knowledge and experience to fully maximise their roles.

Governors give good support to the school. They are successfully building a more detailed knowledge of the school through regular visits, more training, and participating in research projects such as their involvement in the recent homework survey.

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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	3
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?	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	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?	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?	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	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	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

You might remember my visit to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views, and I was very happy to learn how happy you are at school. Thank you.

I agree with you that your school is good.

There are some things that your school really does well:

- you told me that you learn well because the school gives you a good variety of activities to do, such as the theme days and weeks. Your parents told me that they enjoyed the chance to work with you when you made Chinese dragons. You all did very well and your good work brightens up the hall. Parents, take a bow!
- you make better progress than many pupils in other schools because you are keen to learn and you receive good teaching. Most of you are better at English, mathematics and science than pupils in many other schools
- you are very closely involved with the local village and I liked your letters about the village square
- the school is very good at making sure that you know how to stay safe. You told me how you feel it succeeds in doing this and that you feel very well cared for
- children in Reception do well because the school makes sure that they know you and your families well. You get a good start to your schooling
- the school is well led by your headteacher, her deputy, and the governors. All staff are working to improve things even more.

I have asked your school to ensure that:

- in all lessons you are challenged to really think hard. You could help your teachers by telling them when you find the work too easy
- some adults who are in charge of your learning get more experience so they can do the job even better.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector