

Wickhambrook Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124548 |
| Local Authority | SUFFOLK |
| Inspection number | 293027 |
| Inspection dates | 13–14 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Joy Richardson |

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

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 92 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rev Ian Finn |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jackie Whiting |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 July 2002 |
| School address | Wickhambrook Newmarket Suffolk CB8 8XN |
| Telephone number | 01440820309 |
| Fax number | 01440821631 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Wickhambrook is a small rural school serving a wide area including seven Suffolk villages. Two thirds of pupils come to school by bus. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Around 10% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and the percentage with a statement of special educational need is above average. The Wickhambrook Centre for Children with Special Learning Differences, attended part time by pupils from other schools, shares the site and is managed by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school gives pupils a good education. This confirms the school's own evaluation. Though relatively small in size, the school has a big vision of what it can provide for its pupils and how it can help each one to succeed. The headteacher creates a good climate for learning and fosters a strong sense of community. Governors are supportive and parents speak of 'a great team spirit' amongst the staff. The school thinks hard about what it does and how it could do better, seeking the views of pupils and parents to help shape its plans.

Since the previous inspection in 2002, the school has improved significantly and standards have risen. The school is now well placed to continue to improve. Children make a good start in Reception and foundations are laid well for later learning. As a result of good teaching, pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. The school is very effective in supporting pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and it extends the learning of the pupils who are gifted and talented.

Pupils reach above average standards and do particularly well in mathematics. The school checks the progress made by each pupil each term. This shows that pupils do well in writing but progress, especially by boys, is not as rapid as in other subjects. The school is working on this. Writing practice is somewhat limited because opportunities for writing are not planned purposefully across the whole curriculum. Teaching does not consistently ensure that skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation are applied in all work. Teachers set targets for pupils to work towards, but in writing the system is not fully effective in helping pupils to improve.

The school is extremely good at building partnerships to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils gain from the many links forged with other schools and organisations. This smoothes the path for pupils as they join or move to other schools, and increases opportunities for them, for example in sports. The school is open to new ideas from which it can learn and readily shares its work with others. For example, in the setting up of a centre for children with special learning differences, in the old school house. Although not directly serving the school's own pupils, the sharing of expertise between the school and the centre is of mutual benefit. The school works very constructively with other agencies to help overcome barriers to learning for vulnerable children.

The curriculum is good. The school's grounds, from the large field and willow maze to the covered play areas, offer exceptional opportunities for learning, exploration and play. These are used well to enhance curriculum provision and activities are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Pupils are given good care, guidance and support although the school recognises the need to provide more guidance for a small number of pupils in relation to playing together constructively. Pupils' personal development is good in all respects and pupils are keen to contribute to their community. For example, the school council has initiated a 'buddy' system to help deal with playtime upsets. The school is not complacent and is working to develop more sustained, independent play for younger children, and is embarking on a project to extend pupil's repertoire of playground games.

The school is well managed and it uses its resources well. It gives good value for money in offering pupils a well-rounded education and preparing them well for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for writing across the curriculum, and ensure that skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation are consistently applied.
- Develop more effective use of targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school in Reception with skills that are broadly average, although there is wide variation between individuals, and between year groups. The school has good links with a local pre-school setting, which most children attend. These help children to make a good start and they achieve well in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, most children meet or exceed the national goals for learning by this age. They continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Results at the end of Year 2 are above the national average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. A good rate of progress is maintained in Years 3 and 4 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average when pupils leave to go to middle school. The school sets challenging targets for each pupil and monitors their progress closely. In most cases, these targets are met or exceeded, but this is not always the case in writing. The school is working to accelerate progress in writing, particularly by boys. New initiatives are having a positive impact but writing is recognised as an area for continuing development. The school provides strong support for pupils with learning difficulties and they make good progress as a result. It also identifies pupils who are gifted and talented and helps them to achieve their potential. Standards have risen in recent years and are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging. They know that they are valued as individuals and that their contribution counts. Pupils' views are actively sought, and listened to, by staff and governors. The school council has a high profile. Pupils speak with pride of their involvement in designing the new playground, and in making signs displayed around the school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as helping with setting up for assembly. They behave well in lessons and around the school and they know and understand the school's rules. Playground 'buddies', from Years 2, 3 and 4, play an active role in ensuring that pupils enjoy playtimes. The school has grounds that provide excellent opportunities for play. It has plans to introduce play leadership to extend pupil's repertoire of games, and to counter rough play by a small number of younger children, which is occasionally upsetting for others. Pupils successfully learn about keeping safe and about healthy living. They are encouraged to make healthy choices for themselves, for example in sampling a wide range of fruit. They know the value of exercise and enjoy the many opportunities provided. Pupils, staff and parents participate enthusiastically in a daily aerobics session on the playground before school. Pupils develop well as people, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. They learn to play their part within the school and the local community. They take a lively interest in the wider world and gain skills to prepare them for later life. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Work is well planned to take account of pupil's different levels of attainment within each class. Teachers identify groups of pupils requiring additional support or further extension in lessons. The school has a very strong team of support staff who are deployed effectively to give support where it is most needed. They work closely with teachers and this teamwork contributes strongly to pupils' success in learning. Staff manage pupils well, engaging their interest and keeping them focused on learning. Interactive whiteboards are being used to good effect to illustrate teaching points and strengthen understanding. Lessons have clear objectives and activities are purposeful and interesting. Pupils have some individual targets to work towards, though the system is not fully developed throughout the school as a tool to help pupils improve. Pupils learn to write confidently, but do not consistently apply handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills when working on their own. Marking is thorough but it is not always referred to in pupils' subsequent work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Despite its relatively small size, it gives pupils a wide range of opportunities and fosters interest and enjoyment in learning. Specialist teaching is provided in sports, music and French. The school adapts its curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, for example, extending the teaching of phonics to support early literacy learning. It plans themes that can be explored at different levels by pupils of all ages. For example, a recent theme about global awareness has expanded pupils' horizons and enabled them to make connections with people and places far beyond their own community. The school successfully fosters imagination, creativity and practical experience within the curriculum. However, planning for literacy is not fully integrated with other subjects to maximise opportunities for writing across the curriculum. The school welcomes many visitors, and pupils frequently make visits, for example to a theatre in London. Pupils enjoy a good range of clubs, from sports to gardening. The school offers an attractive environment for learning and lively displays show the range and quality of its work. The school makes good use of its facilities and resources, including a well-maintained library and a portable set of laptop computers, to enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils are well known as individuals and the staff work as a team to meet their needs. The school is highly inclusive, working well with families and other schools to find the best solutions for pupils as individuals. The school works closely and constructively with other agencies to ensure appropriate support for pupils. Teaching assistants and midday supervisors meet regularly with the school's leadership and are kept fully informed about pupil's needs. Staff development is tailored to the needs of pupils, and the skills required of staff. Appropriate procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils and for child protection. Close attention is paid to health and safety. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and builds the foundations of good citizenship. The school works in very close partnership with parents, listening carefully to their

views, helping them to support their children's learning and responding rapidly if any concerns arise.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets the tone of the school and harnesses the efforts of the whole staff team in pursuing improvement. She is seeking to delegate responsibilities more widely, and this is encouraging staff to take the initiative and to extend their skills. The headteacher gives an excellent lead in building partnerships to support pupil's learning. She seeks out opportunities for staff development to provide inspiration, for example in creative writing. The school has welcomed a centre for special learning differences to its site and works closely with the local authority in managing this facility. It supports the staff, includes pupils in using its play facilities and benefits reciprocally from expertise in dealing with difficulties in literacy learning. In providing regular placements for trainee students, the school opens itself to new ideas and provides skilled mentoring. Teachers regularly observe others teach. This encourages shared reflectiveness about how to improve. The school evaluates its own performance with honesty and insight, drawing on the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. The governing body is actively supportive and well informed. Good financial management is reflected in the high quality of the learning environment that the school provides.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Wickhambrook Community Primary School, Newmarket, CB8 8XN

I enjoyed meeting you when I visited your school. Thank you for welcoming me and telling me about all the things you do. I was pleased to hear how the school council and all the rest of you discuss ways to make the school better for everyone. You are proud of your school and I think it is a good school too.

I am glad that you learn about eating healthily and taking plenty of exercise. You have a lot of fun with sports and swimming. It was good to see all the children and the grown-ups being energetic and joining in with aerobics at the start of the day.

You are very lucky to have so much space to play outside and so many things you can do. The playground buddies are a really good idea to help stop any upsets at playtime.

The staff work very hard to make your work interesting and help you to understand. You are good at mathematics and reading and you do some good writing too. The staff think you could do even better with writing and I agree. We have been talking about how you could write more in different subjects. It will help if you remember to think hard about your handwriting, spelling and punctuation whenever you write by yourself. You sometimes have targets to work towards and it would be good to use these more to help you improve your work.

I hope you go on enjoying school and learning as much as possible.

With best wishes

Joy Richardson

Lead Inspector