

# Wolston St Margaret's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125676
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	293326
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Hodgkinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	184
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brenda Stone
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Harwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Brookside Main Street Wolston Coventry CV8 3HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 76542212
<b>Fax number</b>	024 76540183

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves a large village a few miles to the east of Coventry. Most pupils are White British. The economic backgrounds of pupils vary widely but the proportion entitled to a free school meal is below average. A high proportion of pupils, over a quarter, has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and a higher than average proportion have statements of special educational need. A very small minority of pupils are from Traveller communities of Irish heritage.

The school has close links with its neighbouring church. Extended provision in the form of a before and an after school club is offered on the school's site by a private provider and has been inspected separately.

When the school was last inspected in June 2005 it was judged to have serious weaknesses in pupils' achievement, both at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the end of Year 2.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Following the outstanding direction given by the headteacher, it has improved rapidly to become a good school. In former areas of serious weakness, its performance has been transformed. The Foundation Stage unit now provides an excellent Nursery and Reception education. Standards at the end of Year 2, which had been very low, are now in line with national averages with pupils making good progress. Overall, the average standards that pupils attain represent good achievement given pupils' starting points. Having turned around performance so effectively, the school is clearly well placed to improve further. Leadership and management are good overall. Effective governance has overcome the financial difficulties reported at the time of the last inspection, to ensure that good resources have been made available to support improvements including those in information and communication technology (ICT).

The improvement in pupils' achievement has come about because teachers now have much higher expectations of the standards their pupils can attain. Pupils are well taught and enjoy some excellent, well planned lessons where their learning is driven forward by very good questioning from their teachers. The pace of learning slows in a few lessons where the teacher is not sharply aware that the class or some individuals are ready to move on to new tasks. Teachers now have very good systems in place for assessing pupils' progress against challenging targets in English and mathematics, and are able to intervene promptly where a pupil's work shows signs of underachievement. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and helpful. Academic support and guidance are therefore generally good. However, in other subjects methods for tracking pupils' progress against targets have yet to be fully developed. This makes it more difficult for leaders and coordinators of those subjects to check that expected standards are consistently met. This means that subject coordinators are not as effective in evaluating performance as they might be.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' social skills flourish in the school's welcoming atmosphere. 'This is a very caring and welcoming school which encourages cooperation and support as well as learning' was a typical comment from a parent. From an early age, pupils learn to work collaboratively and take responsibilities, preparing them well for later life. The school's strong ethos of care and respect for the individual helps pupils feel safe, and promotes good relationships throughout the school community. A good curriculum, which sets learning into interesting contexts, stimulates enjoyment while supporting the effective development of pupils' key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school's extensive play facilities, together with good opportunities for sport and physical activity, help pupils live healthily. Parents have a high regard for the school, and many readily confirm the 'enormous' improvement it has made since the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children join the Nursery with capabilities which vary widely between individuals but which are broadly in line with those expected nationally. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children reach standards which are above average. Most achieve their early learning goals and many work beyond these. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which helps them settle quickly into school and underpins their strong progress

in all areas of learning. The progress children make is very carefully assessed and monitored. The Foundation Stage unit is innovative in mixing Nursery and Reception age children. It offers a highly stimulating indoor and outdoor environment and is exceptionally well equipped so that children enjoy their activities immensely. Those activities are thoroughly planned to develop children's skills. Excellent, well judged intervention by all staff helps to make pupils think and keeps them learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Keep up the pace of learning in lessons by ensuring that teachers keep a careful check of when pupils and classes are ready to move on.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders and coordinators in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in their subjects, particularly by developing systems to track and assess pupils' progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average but rising quickly across the school and pupils achieve well. Test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been in line with national averages for the last two years. In 2007 they were generally above average at the higher levels, especially in Year 2, reflecting the success of the school's work to support higher attaining pupils in reaching their targets. The average overall results in 2007 represent good progress for the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, given their low starting points (associated with the weaknesses in standards reported in the school's last inspection). Standards for current groups of pupils are strengthening further as the quality of education improves, with standards in the Foundation Stage now above average and those in Years 1 and 2 having improved rapidly since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the good support they receive. The curriculum offers pupils good opportunities to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in a range of stimulating contexts, and this has contributed to a strong rise in writing standards for boys and girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and are excited by the opportunities they are offered. Attendance overall is satisfactory. Most pupils have good attendance, although the irregular attendance of pupils from the Traveller community takes school attendance figures below average. Pupils have a strong spiritual, moral and social awareness and know about the beliefs of other world cultures. However, their understanding of what it means to live in a multicultural Britain is less well developed. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy through eating a balanced diet, drinking water regularly, and taking part in the good variety of physical activities offered. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous in their relationships with adults. They make a good contribution to the community by taking responsible roles in the running of the school and in activities in the local community. They take good care of younger pupils and support well those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These personal and social skills enable pupils to develop as rounded individuals, and their key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed well to contribute to their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations of the standards pupils can achieve, especially in English and mathematics. Work is mostly well matched to pupils' capabilities. Expectations are made clear to pupils by detailed, regular and very helpful marking, which shows pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers direct their questions well to ensure that pupils are fully involved in discussions and challenged to give thoughtful responses. Teaching assistants work effectively in support of individual pupils or groups, and help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. In a few lessons the pace of learning slows when the teacher is not sufficiently aware that the class or individual pupils have completed a task and are ready to move on. Where teaching is good or outstanding staff make timely interventions to ensure that pupils learn purposefully in their activities, but elsewhere pupils sometimes miss an activity's main learning points. Pupils generally learn well in friendly and supportive environment. 'That was just my sort of lesson!' said one pupil after getting to grips with some challenging vocabulary in an excellent lesson involving the role play of characters from a book.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school has a broad and rich curriculum. Its quality is enhanced by a good range of trips, visits and extra-curricular activities. It draws well on links with the church, and with the local and global communities. The lively curricular themes, which set pupils to work in interesting contexts, contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to the good development of their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils' social and team working skills are also well promoted. However, some opportunities are lost in the planning and teaching of these themes to sharpen pupils' understanding and awareness of cultural diversity and raise pupils' capabilities across subjects such as history and geography. Pupils' creativity is nonetheless stimulated well, for example through some excellent opportunities to develop their musical skills and through high quality displays of their art work around the building. Pupils' health benefits from a good variety of physical activities and extensive play facilities, together with high profile rewards for healthy eating.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of its caring ethos. Rigorous child protection and safeguarding policies are in place and regularly reviewed. The care and support for pupils and their families stretches beyond the classroom and into the community. The school works sensitively to build relationships with families of children with learning or attendance difficulties to help them support their children's learning. Pupils themselves show a similar care for each other and particularly those who need extra support. Pupils feel very safe in school and know that there is always someone to help should a problem arise. The playground is well supervised and older pupils are able to support younger ones. The academic progress of pupils is well monitored, particularly in English and mathematics where underachievement is swiftly identified and appropriate support is implemented. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in other subjects are not so well developed.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has given the school excellent direction in overcoming its serious weaknesses. She has successfully boosted the morale of staff and the whole school community, so that there is now a very positive 'can-do' attitude to school improvement. Parents are highly supportive of the changes made. In evaluating and improving its performance, the school has listened very carefully to, and acted upon, the views of all its stakeholders, including staff, governors, parents and pupils. It has responded well to the advice, guidance and support given by the local authority. The senior leadership team has, in consultation with staff, set realistic and challenging targets for pupils' progress in English and mathematics, which have raised expectations and improved standards. Leaders of these subjects have been able to analyse information on pupils' progress against their targets to help them improve teaching and the curriculum. Leaders and coordinators of other subjects, however, do not have such clear information to help them manage. There has been a considerable improvement in the training and involvement of subject coordinators in the school's self-evaluation since the last inspection, although formal monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons is limited. Good governance has enabled the drive for improved standards to be backed by good resources.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

7 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wolston St Margaret's CE Primary School, Wolston CV8 3HH

Many thanks for the welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and at play.

Like you and your parents, we think Wolston St Margaret's is a good school, which has improved a great deal since inspectors visited last. It is well led and managed, and the headteacher has taken it forward in an excellent direction. You make good progress to reach standards similar to those found in other schools, and those standards have risen a lot since the last inspection. Children in the excellent Foundation Stage Unit make particularly good progress to reach standards which are above average.

You learn well because you are well taught. Lessons mostly give you enjoyable activities through which you can learn to develop your writing, number and ICT skills. Teachers give you very good information about how well you are doing in English and mathematics, and show you how to improve. Your good curriculum makes sure you have plenty of opportunities for physical activity and learning about staying healthy. The school takes good care of you and keeps you safe. It gives you plenty of opportunities to work together in teams and to take responsibilities, and it is good to see how well you carry out those roles. The school prepares you well for later life.

There are two main ways in which the school can get even better. Firstly, in a few lessons we noticed that the pace of your learning slowed when you completed work. So, we have asked the teachers to ensure that they are always aware of when you have completed tasks and are ready to move on. Secondly, the teachers who lead subjects other than English and mathematics at present do not gather enough detailed information about your progress in those subjects.

I know that you will help the school to continue to get better by working hard and trying your best. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson Lead inspector

## Annex B



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Lead inspector