



Wentworth Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131599
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 293792
Inspection dates 1–2 February 2007
Reporting inspector Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wentworth Drive
School category	Community		Dartford
Age range of pupils	4–11		DA1 3NG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01322 220451
Number on roll (school)	505	Fax number	01322 291562
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Brian Pitkin
		Headteacher	David Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 1–2 February 2007	Inspection number 293792
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is just above the national average and has increased significantly in the last few years. An increasing number of pupils, many with learning and emotional needs, join the school later than their peers. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with about a tenth from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with outstanding features. It is very effectively fulfilling its commitment to parents to 'count on us to do our very best to make childhood as happy and productive as possible'. Parents acknowledged this commitment in their many written responses to the inspection questionnaire such as, 'Wentworth is a wonderful school with excellent facilities', 'I would strongly recommend Wentworth' and 'I cannot fault the school at all.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the first class care, guidance and support they are given. Pupils appreciate the efforts adults make to provide an exceptional range of clubs and extra activities. They respond very positively to the many additional facilities in the school, such as the Year 6 common room.

Pupils bring this same level of commitment to their learning, shown in the good presentation of their work. They say that they are expected to work hard but enjoy this because learning is interesting and adults are always helpful. Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum result in good achievement. However, in a few lessons, some pupils do not make sufficient progress because the tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' capabilities and prior knowledge. Pupils reach average standards in the national tests from a below average start. This enables them to acquire the basic skills and experiences that will help them when they transfer to secondary schools and also to achieve economic well-being in the future. The recent focus on improving pupils' writing and mathematics has been successful.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The senior team's outstanding leadership is seen in the way all adults have a shared view about priorities and work as a team to take the school forward. Governors and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they modestly evaluated pupils' personal development and the school's levels of care as good. A real strength lies in the school's rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and the support given when anyone is seen to be falling behind. The passion to ensure high quality facilities is seen in the exciting learning environment, whether in the playground or within the school, such as in the library 'discovery area'. Led by a headteacher with a determination to ensure that academic and personal development are given equal priority so that all achieve to the best of their capabilities, the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable all pupils to progress at an equally good rate by ensuring that the work given to all of them closely matches their earlier knowledge and skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception classes from a wide range of pre-school experiences and make good progress through Reception. They develop a love of learning and an ability to work together, although their skills across all the areas of learning are still below those expected for their age, particularly in the early stages of learning to read and calculate. Recent changes made to the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 have helped pupils to raise attainment further in the Year 2 tests, which have already been above national averages for some years. Many of the pupils joining the school during Years 3 to 6 have complex learning needs, which means that results in the Year 6 tests are in line with national averages, but still represent good achievement for most pupils. A number of parents of pupils who join the school late commented on how pleased they are with their children's progress. Following a dip in results in the Year 6 tests in 2005, the school identified a need to change its approach to teaching English and mathematics. This has brought about significant improvements, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels. The school is now bringing the same determination to improving pupils' investigative skills in science, showing its ability to bring about improvement when it identifies a problem. The progress of individual pupils is monitored rigorously and a very wide range of strategies used to ensure that pupils are given the support they need to catch up quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school and their learning and show this in their appreciation and enjoyment of everything the school offers. They speak warmly of the excellent facilities and of the help and support of adults in the school. They are anxious to succeed and behave well in lessons and around school so that lessons are purposeful and playtime is an enjoyable social time together. Pupils' views are frequently sought, and they value being listened to. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to their school through, for example, the work of the school council in improving playground resources. Older pupils appreciate the training provided alongside lunchtime supervisors which has enabled them to make a valuable contribution to helping younger pupils play well together. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now above average. Pupils are very aware of the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity and enjoy participating in the many sports activities provided. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, too, is outstanding, and pupils benefit from the many visitors who come to the school to enrich the curriculum. They make enthusiastic contributions to the local community through a range of activities and fund-raising events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching is a key feature in the school's ongoing improvement. Detailed planning is underpinned by teachers' high expectations and secure subject knowledge. Such features, combined with clear explanations of objectives at the start of lessons, result in pupils' enthusiastic participation in learning. Whilst, in most instances, teachers plan and set interesting and challenging tasks that are well matched to the diverse needs and stages of learning in each class, this is sometimes not the case. Where work is not matched closely enough to pupils' capabilities, the quality and extent of learning is reduced for some pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used well to give an effective visual stimulus to learning. Such was the case in a literacy lesson when the board was used thoughtfully to enhance pupils' understanding of how to construct and write a balanced argument. Teachers' perceptive questioning, together with frequent working in pairs, helps pupils clarify their thinking and consider carefully their responses. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for the above average proportion of pupils with a variety of individual needs. Teachers' thorough marking helps pupils understand what they should do to improve. Pupils' successful involvement in evaluating their own progress helps them become more involved in their own learning and to achieve even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has been improved recently. It now provides an even better range of opportunities to meet pupils' needs. The comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education makes a very effective contribution to pupils' personal development. The curriculum in the Reception classes provides a good balance of creative and exploratory play, and focused teaching in small groups develops children's confidence very effectively. The innovative curriculum in Years 1 and 2, planned around a series of themes and involving pupils in what they want to learn, has been introduced very carefully, ensuring that it has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements. French is being introduced with the same care, using expertise from a local secondary school in the initial stages. The curriculum for older pupils is also being refined to make more links between subjects, but the school recognises that this can be taken further. The breadth of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities, including a residential visit to France, is outstanding. Pupils say that they are very lucky to have so many activities to choose from.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding, reflecting the school's commitment to the development of the whole child. The vast majority of parents are delighted with the care their children receive, which was summed up by one parent who wrote 'the school treats children as individuals ... they are concerned, not just for their education but their well-being.' Pupils' pastoral needs are met sensitively with excellent levels of help and support for the most vulnerable pupils. Comprehensive procedures for child protection including risk assessment ensure that children are properly safeguarded. Good records are kept to monitor pupils' progress and are used very effectively to help teachers identify individual strengths and weaknesses in order to provide suitable support and challenge for pupils. Pupils are clearly aware of and actively work towards the targets set in literacy and numeracy to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Through praise, recognition and opportunities to take on responsibility, children's self-confidence and self-esteem are developed successfully. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils say that it is easy to talk to the staff if they have any problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and, given excellent support from the deputy and assistant headteachers, they have led significant improvements in curricular provision, accommodation and resources. Such developments have resulted in improved attendance, greater achievement and considerable gains in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels of performance when assessed at the end of Year 6. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school development plan is detailed and well constructed, and takes into account the views of all involved with the school. As such, it is an effective tool to move the school forward. The leadership team is very successful in its quest to ensure the school's inclusive nature. Senior managers and teachers in charge of English, mathematics and science check the quality of teaching effectively. Other subject leaders have not been involved sufficiently regularly in this process, but the school has identified this as a current priority. However, thorough knowledge of pupils' progress, stemming from the school's thorough assessment procedures, enables challenging targets to be set. Governors carry out their duties most effectively. They manage finances well, play a full part in strategic planning, and are purposeful as 'critical friends' in holding the school to account.

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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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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?	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.

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	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

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave us when we inspected your school. Our discussions with you helped us to find out a lot about the school. I promised you that we would let you know what we found out.

- Wentworth is a good school. We are pleased that you recognise this. You are outstanding ambassadors for your school.
- The adults in charge of the school do a good job.
- You have very good school facilities, such as the design studio, the splendid 'discovery room' and playground equipment and we are pleased that you value these.
- You work hard and we agree with you that the lessons are interesting and this helps you to enjoy your work.
- You make good progress in your work because you are taught well.
- Your teachers mark your work very carefully so that you know what you have to do to improve the next piece.
- We were pleased that older ones amongst you find your targets particularly helpful in knowing what you have to do to improve over the next few weeks.
- We agree with you that adults take exceptional care of you so that you feel safe and secure in school.
- Adults listen carefully to what you think and the school council works hard to improve the school, for example, by introducing 'playground buddies'.
- We were pleased that incidents of bullying are very rare but sorted out quickly when they do happen.
- You are fortunate to have a wide range of clubs and we are pleased that so many of you take part in these.
- The sports opportunities help you to keep fit and healthy.

We understand why you said that nothing needed to be changed in the school, but we agree with your teachers that your work could be even better. We have asked them to make sure that the tasks they give you challenge you even further.

Very best wishes for the future.