



Windhill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134682
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 294147
Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007
Reporting inspector David Manuel

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Windhill
School category	Community		Bishops Stortford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Hertfordshire CM23 2NE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01279 696850
Number on roll (school)	265	Fax number	01279 696852
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Darker
		Headteacher	Mr Stephen Clark
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	1–2 March 2007	294147

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This newly established primary school opened just over a year ago. It is of average size and serves an area with a wide range of socio-economic circumstances, including significant social deprivation. A higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals and has learning difficulties and disabilities. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below levels expected for children of this age. Pupils have regularly joined the school throughout the year, and include those from Portuguese, Polish and other European families. Many of these are at an early stage of speaking English.

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 school which is improving term by term. The headteacher provides good leadership and this is a key factor in the school's development. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most behaviour is good and the small proportion of unacceptable behaviour is managed well by adults. Pupils enjoy their lessons greatly.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good, especially for vulnerable pupils and their families. The vast majority of parents are supportive and are very pleased with the school. Good systems for ensuring pupils' safety are regularly reviewed. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They show a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Attendance is average. The school works hard to maintain attendance levels in view of the term-time holidays taken regularly by some families.

Pupils receive a good start in the nursery and reception classes. Important early skills are developed effectively from low starting points and although pupils achieve well, standards are still below expected levels by the end of reception. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Particularly good support is provided for the wide range of individual needs, including their academic and personal needs. This support includes a Nurture Group for pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties and intervention programmes for academic needs. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are at expected levels for pupils of the relevant ages, although too few attain higher levels by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and improving this is a current school priority.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' planning is effective and caters well for the wide range of pupils' needs. New on-going assessment and tracking procedures are in place to identify groups of pupils for whom the relevant support is required. However, this information is not yet used effectively enough to enable pupils of all capabilities to achieve as well as they should. Resources are used well to support learning, including new interactive whiteboards and computers.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of extra-curricular activities enjoyed by a significant number of pupils. The school has recognised the need for a more inspiring and integrated curriculum and new strategies are being introduced to link subjects with more creative activities. These strategies are not yet fully in place and require further development. There is a lack of focus on developing key skills within subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher works closely with all staff through the new Leadership Group and the Improvement Teams. Staff are constantly seeking ways to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of education provided. Governors are fully involved in continual evaluation and review. Finances are managed well and the school gives good value for money. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the new assessment procedures to provide better information on what pupils need to do to improve in order to raise standards further.
- Ensure new curriculum initiatives focus on learning objectives and key skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Stage children learn quickly, particularly in the development of personal, social, language and communication skills. Progress is good from the low starting points but standards are below expected levels by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and in the first year of tests in 2006, after only one term in the school, they reached average levels in reading and writing but levels in mathematics were below average. By Year 6 pupils continue to achieve well. In their first year of tests, standards in English and science were at the national average but standards in mathematics were below the national average, particularly at the higher Level 5. Improvements in mathematics are a current priority and are proving successful. Detailed records and work samples show that the current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve average standards which represents good progress from their particular starting points. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English are supported well by staff and also achieve well. The new resources in information and communication technology (ICT) are used well and pupils are developing a good range of skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The school has clear systems for promoting good behaviour and dealing with unacceptable conduct. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the clubs provided. Attendance is broadly average, but it is affected by pupils taking holidays during term time. The school is working hard to improve attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of cultures within society. Pupils' sense of responsibility and achievement are developed very well through the Windhill Challenge Award, which recognises their contributions at home, in school and in the community. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community through the school council and other responsibilities. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils are developing well the basic skills needed in later education and life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching observed was good, some satisfactory and some outstanding. Teachers plan well to meet the wide range of pupils' needs and good use is made of the good quality resources. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons for pupils of all capabilities and needs. Learning is made enjoyable for pupils, who are becoming increasingly confident. Good use is made of ICT and other resources to extend learning skills. Consistently good management of behaviour in lessons is proving successful in improving pupils' learning. New on-going assessment and tracking procedures help teachers to identify different groups of pupils and guide planning for the next stages in learning. However, this information is not yet used effectively enough to set challenging targets to enable pupils of all capabilities to achieve as well as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT but these subjects are not yet fully linked to other areas of the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local and national places of interest. A good range of after-school activities are enjoyed by a significant proportion of pupils. Provision is extended through the Nurture Group which effectively meets the needs of pupils with social and emotional difficulties. The Windhill Challenge encourages initiative and builds self-esteem in learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties are provided for well through a range of relevant intervention programmes. The current review of the curriculum aims to promote enjoyment and high achievement through a more integrated approach to learning, but is not yet fully in place.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils well and pupils feel that there is always someone they can turn to if they are in difficulty. The school meets current government requirements on the safeguarding of pupils, carries out regular risk assessments and all staff have received appropriate training in child protection. The school engages parents well in supporting pupils through termly reports and consultations. Pupils are also involved in reviewing targets. The school is developing its system of assessment so that it will give better information on what pupils need to do next to improve, but this has not yet had its full impact on achievement. There is good support for pupils who have learning difficulties, disabilities and behavioural difficulties, as well as for those pupils for whom English is not their first language.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is committed to improving the welfare and achievement of pupils. In the short time the school has been open, he has brought together an effective staff team. The quality of self-evaluation is good. Staff work well in teams to evaluate standards and improvement in subjects and new initiatives are introduced regularly with success, as with the current focus on raising standards in mathematics. The new governing body works closely with the school and is regularly involved in monitoring and evaluating performance. Governors have good awareness of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. Their strategies are proving successful in raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the new school.

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	NA

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	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

5 March 2007

Dear Children

Windhill Primary School, Windhill, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2NE

Thank you all very much for helping us during the inspection and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. With the opening of the new school and the many changes, it has not been easy for you and we congratulate everybody on the good start you have made. Mr. Clark, his teachers and the governors are working very hard to help everyone settle, enjoy learning and achieve great things.

We think you make good progress in your learning and your teachers are helping you to become happy and confident young people. Those of you in the nursery and reception are given a good start to life in school. Good work continues in the infant and the junior classes. Most of your lessons are good and teachers make them really interesting. Those of you who need help with your learning or behaviour are well cared for and you say you are pleased that you can go to any adult for help if needed. Nearly all your parents are pleased with the way that the school has progressed in the short time it has been open.

We hope you will do even better in the future. We have asked your teachers to make your lessons even more interesting and successful by linking subjects together and helping your learning get even better. We have also asked teachers to use the assessment information about you even more to set you harder targets in subjects so that you know what to do to reach even higher standards.

Mrs. Richmond, Mr. Sangster and I wish you all every success in the future.

Best wishes to you all.

David Manuel

Lead inspector