

Wayfield Community Primary School and Nursery Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118579
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	298566
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Cass
Headteacher	Valerie Rose
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 1999
School address	Wayfield Road Chatham ME5 0HH
Telephone number	01634 843544
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area where there is significant social disadvantage. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is low and there is a high proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties in every year group. There is also a higher than average level of mobility amongst the pupils. A Surestart Children's Centre is being established within the school. The number on roll has fallen significantly in recent years and the school is now smaller than the average for its type. There has been a very high turnover of teachers in the past year. Every class in Years 3 to 6 has a teacher who was appointed four weeks before this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has worked closely in partnership with the local authority during the past 15 months to address the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. It now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Governors and senior leaders have maintained a clear vision and a steady hand through challenging times. A major building and refurbishment programme caused significant upheaval, and the recent high turnover of staff has been another key factor in slowing down the rate of progress. Nevertheless, important strides have been made in improving the quality of education and these are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress.

Standards are still much lower than national averages, but they are rising steadily and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are now making satisfactory progress because they are receiving more carefully planned support and guidance, both in lessons and through additional small group activities. Significant improvements to the curriculum have ensured that lessons are more appealing and interesting for boys. Comprehensive systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress from term to term are a key factor in the pupils' improved rates of progress. Class teachers do not always use this assessment information rigorously enough to ensure that the work planned for different groups promotes good progress during the lesson, particularly when pupils are working independently.

The school's main aim is for every pupil to make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This is already happening in the Foundation Stage where children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in acquiring social and language skills. Better teaching and improved resources are enabling pupils to make faster progress in reading in Years 1 to 6. The school recognises that it now needs to accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

Throughout the school, teachers have improved the way in which they manage teaching time. This ensures that pupils are actively engaged in learning rather than sitting passively for too long. As a result, there are fewer instances of misbehaviour and distraction from learning. Most pupils enjoy school, behave appropriately and work hard, but there are still a few who find it hard to concentrate. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall due to the high absence rate of a small minority of pupils. The school has introduced strategies to tackle this which are beginning to show success. Adults look after pupils well and help them to feel safe and secure. Teachers set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve, but these are not broken down for the pupils in a way that helps them to measure their own progress towards their goals.

Senior leaders have managed to sustain a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff, despite the many changes of personnel. The newly appointed teachers in Years 3 to 6 are already off to a purposeful start and have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Accurate self-evaluation gives staff and governors a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement. However, observations of lessons do not always focus closely enough on how to improve the quality of pupils' learning. The improvements that have been made in a relatively short time indicate that the school has the capacity to continue raising standards and achievement for all pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'He comes home every day bubbling with enthusiasm about what he has been doing'. So wrote one parent about her child's experience in the Nursery and others echo the sentiment. Good quality teaching and an exciting range of activities ensure that children get off to a good start and enjoy learning. They make good progress in all areas of learning but a significant minority do not reach the standards expected by the end of the Reception year because of their low starting points. Nursery and Reception children learn effectively alongside each other for much of the time, splitting into small teams for more focused adult-led activities. Occasionally, the noise from some activities makes it difficult for children to hear each other and the teacher when speaking in group discussions.

Frequent observations of children at play enable teachers to build effectively on the children's existing knowledge and skills. Adults are always alert to opportunities for developing language and all speak clearly in order to set children a good example. The daily organisation runs like clockwork as children move from short adult-led activities to choosing their own interests in the classroom or outside. Children get plenty of fresh air and exercise through daily outdoor activities, thanks to the large all-weather awning. The outside area is still being developed in order to make the most of its potential in promoting all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6, especially in writing and mathematics, and involve them more productively in working towards challenging individual targets.
- Ensure that teachers make increasingly rigorous use of assessment information to plan work that enables all pupils to make good progress in lessons, especially when they are working independently.
- Sharpen the procedures for evaluating the quality of lessons so that these help teachers to accelerate pupils' learning.
- Monitor the impact of strategies to improve attendance to ensure they are successful.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

For the first time in several years, pupils' achievement in the Year 6 national tests was close to the national average in 2007, though standards remained low owing to the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This satisfactory achievement is reflected throughout Years 1 to 6. In fact, a minority of both boys and girls are now making good progress in English, mathematics and science as teachers build up a better picture of where there are gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, this is not yet consistent, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in reading. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because of the consistently good teaching that builds effectively on their previous learning day by day.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly and soon become confident and independent. They are keen to learn and responsive to the adults who care for them. As pupils get older, most build upon these early experiences well and maintain an enthusiasm for school. A few find it hard to live up to the school's expectations of them and their behaviour is occasionally disruptive. A small minority of pupils and parents expressed concerns about bullying, although school councillors report that this has improved since a recent 'anti-bullying day'. Low attendance rates amongst a small minority of pupils are a significant barrier to raising standards. Despite the best efforts of the school and the education welfare officer this still remains an area of concern. Pupils' moral and social development is stronger than their spiritual and cultural development because there is a greater emphasis on these aspects in everyday school life. Most pupils exercise appropriate social responsibility and the school council is beginning to have some influence on how the school is run, but opportunities for all pupils to contribute to the school and wider community are relatively limited. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and taking regular exercise. They are making steady progress in acquiring the necessary literacy, numeracy and computer skills to equip them for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There has been good improvement in the teaching of reading since the last inspection and this has accelerated pupils' progress. Teachers now manage pupils' behaviour effectively because there are consistent approaches throughout the school. They form good relationships with pupils and expect them to do well. This creates a positive ethos for learning in every classroom. Pupils are usually actively involved in learning rather than sitting passively for too long listening to the teacher. As a result, most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the amount of writing pupils produce in a lesson. Effective use of computer technology helps to make learning lively and interesting. Ongoing assessments of pupils' attainment provide helpful information to inform teachers' planning, but this is not yet used effectively enough to ensure that planned activities match all pupils' needs and capabilities. In a few lessons, pupils who were expected to work independently did not have sufficient knowledge or skills to complete the task.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There has been good improvement in the way the curriculum is planned to make more effective links between subjects. This is a work in progress as new teachers are gradually familiarising themselves with the topics and adapting them to suit their pupils. A good feature is the way pupils' views and interests are taken into account. This has helped particularly in designing topics that appeal to both boys and girls. Attractive book corners in every classroom, good additional support for pupils who are struggling, a new library and a wider range of reading books have successfully raised the profile of reading and boosted pupils' progress. The school recognises the need to make writing a higher priority by developing it more effectively through other subjects and celebrating good examples through display. Pupils enjoy the good range of

clubs and additional activities at lunchtime and after school. Year 6 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their recent residential trip which helped them to develop team-building skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are sound procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety and protecting them from harm. Adults care for pupils well and pupils say they feel able to talk to someone if they have a problem, for example in 'bubble time'. The home-school support worker and the learning mentor offer additional support to pupils who may be experiencing difficulties. The lunchtime activities run by teaching assistants are popular and help to make the playground a calmer and safer place. The school works closely with external agencies to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time but these are still too high. Teachers' marking has improved since the last inspection but does not always give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work. Pupils are not given sufficiently specific targets to guide them towards their expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management has inevitably been affected by the high turnover of staff, especially those with key responsibilities for the curriculum. Senior leaders and governors have worked closely with external advisers to ensure the school continues to improve, albeit at a slower pace than is needed to help all pupils make consistently good progress. Nonetheless, the school is making steady improvement. A more stimulating environment for learning, rising standards in reading and fewer incidences of disruptive behaviour in lessons have all resulted from actions taken over the past 15 months. Although half of the teachers are new to the school, there is already a strong team spirit and shared sense of purpose amongst staff. An extensive monitoring programme provides senior leaders and governors with an accurate picture of the priorities for improvement. Lesson observations do not always focus sharply enough on pupils' learning in order to help teachers to accelerate their progress.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wayfield Community Primary School and Nursery Unit, Chatham, ME5 0HH

Thank you for making us welcome and talking to us about your work during our recent visit. Your school is improving and is now giving you a satisfactory standard of education. You are doing better than you were when the last inspection happened and most of you are now making satisfactory progress. Some of you have made good progress in the last year, especially in reading. Your classrooms now have attractive book corners and this is helping you to enjoy reading more. We have told the school that you now need to make faster progress in writing and mathematics. Those of you who are in the Cherries and Seedlings are doing well because the teachers are helping you to learn lots of new things through playing as well as learning your sounds and numbers.

Some of you told us that you enjoy learning now because the teachers make lessons more fun than they used to be. This is helping you to pay better attention. Most of you work hard but a few of you do not behave as well as you should and this distracts other pupils. Some of you and a few of your parents are worried about bullying, but most of you say that the anti-bullying day has made a difference. The adults take good care of you and you feel safe knowing there is always someone to talk to you if you need help. The school has recently introduced targets for you. These are a good thing, but we think they need to be more personal to you so that you know exactly what you have to do to reach the levels expected of you each term.

The school keeps good records of your progress from term to term so that the headteacher and staff can spot if any of you are falling behind. Although the teachers know what level you are working at, they do not always make sure that the work they give you is at just the right level for each one of you. We saw a few of you struggling in mathematics lessons because you were unable to do the tasks properly without the teacher's help. We have asked the teachers to improve this for you.

The adults who run the school know exactly what needs to be improved. They are working together as a team to help you all make better progress. A few of you are not making sufficient progress because your attendance is too low. You can help to improve this by making a bigger effort to come to school more regularly. They have done a good job on planning the curriculum and we know that you gave them some good ideas for topics that interest you. Sometimes they come into your lessons to see how well you are doing. We have asked them to look more closely at how well you are learning so that the teachers can help you to make faster progress.

With best wishes, Carole Skinner Lead inspector

Annex B



4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Wayfield Community Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Chatham, ME5 0HH**

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With best wishes,
Carole Skinner
Lead inspector