

Wenlock C of E Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109633
Local Authority	LUTON LA
Inspection number	310047
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Peter Budgell
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Beaconsfield Road Luton Bedfordshire LU2 0RW
Telephone number	01582 730624
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average Church of England school with a local intake. There has been a rapid increase in the number of learners from minority ethnic groups in the last three years. Over a third of pupils now come from this group and the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is nearly double the national average and a significant proportion of pupils have complex social or emotional needs. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly above the national average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has a small number of looked after children. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the expectations for their age, and the attainment for the youngest pupils has recently improved. The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2005. The school has been recently re-accredited as a healthy school. It is also part of two networks of schools with the focus on improving mathematics and the introduction of a foreign language in the summer term 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which cares well for its pupils. It has a calm atmosphere and pupils are making the progress they should across all year groups. Year 6 pupils are on target to attain broadly average standards. The school now has a firm foundation on which to build future improvement.

The school has recently emerged from a turbulent period caused by a period of high staff mobility and the rapid absorption of a large number of pupils following the closure of a local school. For example, a fifth of the current Year 6 joined the school in Year 5. Staff recruitment has been difficult, leading to the appointment of many teachers on short-term contracts. During this period of turbulence, pupils' behaviour deteriorated and they did not progress or achieve as well as they should have. There were often gaps in their learning causing a dip in the test results in 2007. Pupils' behaviour and the impact of the high turnover of staff have understandably worried a significant minority of parents and rebuilding parents' confidence in the school and its leadership is an important priority.

Staffing is now more stable and effective systems now support teachers. This has resulted in pupils' good personal development. Their behaviour is good because staff make effective use of praise, encouragement and rewards. Although the school has a few pupils who require intensive support, they are generally able to learn without distraction. Pupils enjoy school because they are gaining a sense of success, reflected in their good attitudes to learning. They report feeling safe and secure because the school's personal, social and health education programme means that pupils are now kinder to each other and they feel any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are tackled effectively. The school uses the information gained from the excellent assessment systems to ensure that pupils' progress is tracked carefully. As a result, underachievement is identified early, and teaching assistants effectively target and support those pupils who need extra help. Teaching is satisfactory overall because, although variable, much of teaching is good and is improving. The school has developed a two-pronged approach to raising standards. In the upper school, effective catch-up programmes are helping to tackle underachievement caused by gaps in pupils' learning. In Year 3, changes to the curriculum ensure that links are made between subjects and as a result, key skills, particularly in language, are reinforced. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, this has not been extended to other year groups, as yet. In addition, along with the effective use of infant school approaches, means that pupils are settling to their new school more quickly, making at least steady progress and working at an appropriate level for their age. This provides a platform of achievement, which can be built on in subsequent years.

The headteacher has steered the school well through its turbulent period. She has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. Leadership and management and the school's capacity for improvement are satisfactory overall. This is because, whilst subject and year group leaders are developing their skills and have good potential, it is too soon to see the impact of their work in raised standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards across the school by:
- improving the consistency of good teaching
- modifying the curriculum beyond Year 3 by linking subjects and reinforcing key skills.

- Re-establish overall parental confidence in the school.

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

In 2007, pupils in Year 6 reached broadly average standards in English but below average standards in mathematics and science. Girls did better than boys in English but their performance in mathematics was very low. These pupils made slow progress during their time in junior school.

The school's assessments shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain standards close to the national average. They are making good progress in their writing, because it is a focus in the school, and satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics. In lessons, there was no difference between boys' and girls' performance. Pupils are now making at least the expected progress across all year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties make steady progress toward meeting their targets, especially those with emotional and social needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of the increased opportunities for speaking and listening in classrooms and the induction and support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They are learning to take responsibility for their actions and to manage their feelings because of the intensive work undertaken in personal, social and health education. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school works hard on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This is a faith school and this underpins pupils' spiritual development, but it is inclusive and embracing of other faiths. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and know how to look after themselves. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils who are consistently well behaved do not always feel that this is recognised. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community and develop workplace skills satisfactorily. Attendance is around the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has acted on the need to improve the quality of teaching across the school and thus to halt the legacy of underachievement. Teaching is now good in Years 3 and 6. It is more variable elsewhere. In Year 3, working with a revised curriculum, teaching is ensuring pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In Year 6, good steps are taken to identify and tackle gaps in pupils' earlier learning and this is leading to better achievement than in previous years. Teaching places strong and effective emphasis on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. Effective liaison and good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils contributes strongly to the good support for pupils needing additional help with learning, particularly those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Information and communication technology is used effectively to foster learning. Excellent systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress across the school are beginning

to lead to improvement. Teachers are able to group pupils of similar ability within classes or sets and this means that challenging, yet achievable, targets are set for all.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The required curriculum is taught throughout the school. There is good provision in lessons to support pupils' personal development. The curriculum has been developed in Year 3 to improve the transition from the infant to the junior school. This is preparing pupils better for the different curricular expectations and helping to raise standards. Increased links between subjects make this wider curriculum more meaningful and brings learning alive for pupils. It also provides opportunities to reinforce key skills. These new approaches have yet to be extended to work in all age groups. The curriculum is enhanced well through a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Many pupils participate in these enrichment activities, which have a positive effect on their enjoyment, health, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Systems in place for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are robust. Well-trained staff organise activities at lunchtime that helps pupils structure their free time. Good quality food encourages healthy eating. Learners at risk and those with learning or other difficulties are identified and supported; their progress is tracked and intervention strategies are used well. Good links with specialist outside bodies are used to help support pupils who need extra help with their learning. Home workers and behaviour support assistants provide good support to individual pupils and families. Induction systems for new pupils and those with English as an additional language are robust, enabling these pupils to make good progress. Attendance is closely monitored and poor attendance is tackled.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides resilient, dedicated leadership. She is very committed to, and ambitious for, the school, its pupils and its staff. She has an extremely effective working partnership with the deputy headteacher because they have complementary skills. Together they have established a firm foundation for the school's future development. The school makes effective use of targets to track, with teachers, the progress their pupils are making. Management is good; the school functions well on a day-by-day basis. Training is being provided to develop subject and year co-ordinators' skills. Some are new to their responsibilities and hence their work has yet to contribute to raising pupils' standards. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed but, as many are newly appointed, their roles in strategic leadership and critical friendship as yet are limited. Aware of this, some are undertaking training in order to improve their effectiveness. They have a clear role to play, alongside staff, in re-establishing some parents' confidence in the school.

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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?	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?	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?	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	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?	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

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

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wenlock C of E Junior School, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 0RW

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. I enjoyed the assembly I attended and the story of the twigs. There was a very warm family atmosphere and you all looked very smart. My particular thanks to those members of the school council and Year 6 pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us. I was impressed by your thoughtful answers and what you had to say was very helpful. I thought I would share with you our findings.

The school is helping you develop as young people well. Your behaviour is good and the school is a calm place of learning. You are now making the kind of progress that you would expect across the school and Year 6 is on track to attain standards seen in other schools. Well done! You have coped well with a period when this was not always the case and when, for many reasons, some of you have had a number of different teachers. This has understandably worried some of your parents. It is important that the school helps them rebuild their trust and gain a picture of it as it is now.

You told us that you enjoy school and now feel secure and safe in school because the teachers solve any incidents or unkindness. You think the behaviour systems are managed fairly for the most part, though I have told Mrs Campbell that some of you felt that children who are consistently well behaved are not always rewarded as much as children who turn over a 'new leaf'. We think that Mrs Campbell and the staff care for you a great deal and provide you with good support and keep a very close eye on the progress you are making. In many lessons, you make good progress in your learning and we have asked your teachers to work on ensuring this happens more often across the school. We also asked Mrs Campbell to ensure that you have a chance to develop your writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

The school has established a firm foundation on which to build and improve further and, with your help, I am sure that it will.

Sincere good wishes for your future school careers

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector