

Wyvern School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110257
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	310241
Inspection date	24 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	303
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Buckingham-Shum
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Hopkinson
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aylesbury Street Wolverton Milton Keynes MK12 5HU
Telephone number	01908 312275
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following areas:

- the impact and consistency of the teaching on sustaining improvements to standards, particularly in reading and the achievement of boys
- the extent to which assessment in the EYFS is used to set targets and track the achievement of the children
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' academic and personal development, and
- the extent to which the school acts on pupils' and parents' views.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, work in books, the analysis of test results, teachers' assessments and records of pupils' performance, as well as parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Wyvern is a large infant school. It has a Nursery for three-year-olds who all attend part-time for either morning or afternoon sessions. Four-year-old children attend one of three Reception classes full-time. Both the Nursery and Reception classes comprise the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There is also a Day Nursery managed by the Local Authority operating on the school site, although this was not part of this inspection.

Throughout the school there is significant ethnic diversity represented amongst the pupils. The majority of pupils are White British and more than a third of the pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils joining the school who are in the early stages of learning English is higher than in most schools. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, although in some year groups it is higher. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of most schools. The main areas of need are in speech, language, emotional or specific learning difficulties, with a very small number of physically disabled pupils. The school has the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards as well as accreditation for the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wyvern is a good school whose pupils are enthusiastic about all that the staff offer them. There is strong pastoral support and consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Standards are improving well. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 2 standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils starting points and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The teaching is never less than good throughout the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, with some that is outstanding. This consistency, combined with good leadership, accounts for the continued rise in standards and good improvements to the school since its last inspection. Teachers and support staff, including those responsible for pupils learning English as an additional language, are effective in helping pupils to improve their language and communication skills. The highly effective programme of phonics teaching, delivered across all classes and tailored to meet the needs of all abilities, accounts for the improved standards in reading and writing.

Leadership, management and governance are good overall. The strong leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and management team underpins the school's success and enables pupils, regardless of background or ability, to make good rates of progress in both their academic and personal development. Even so, senior staff are not complacent and their very accurate evaluations recognise that boys make slower progress in reading when compared to girls. The analysis of pupils' performance points to weaknesses in boys' reading development, particularly in their ability to comprehend or explain what they are reading. There is scope to improve opportunities for boys to read widely.

There is good community cohesion and racial harmony. Governors and staff have developed excellent partnerships with parents, other schools, organisations and the local and wider community. The vast majority of parents who returned pre-inspection questionnaires expressed a high level of satisfaction. 'Our daughter loves school', wrote one, and another reflected the views of many when rightly stating that the staff are 'friendly, warm and enthusiastic'.

Children start school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three and four-year-olds. Most of the children who join the EYFS stay on at the school and move into Year 1. Assessments show that the children in both the Nursery and Reception classes make good rates of progress, which continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Teachers and support staff are effective in helping the pupils to thrive and develop in a supportive and caring environment. Consequently, pupils enjoy school very much, and this is reflected in their good attendance. When asked why they like school so much, one replied that, 'It's great because we learn our golden rules so we can always be nice to each other.' Behaviour is outstanding and the vigilance of the staff helps the pupils to feel extremely safe and well cared for.

The headteacher is particularly skilled in using assessment information to interpret how best to deploy staff and resources in order to sustain improvements to standards. This helps teachers to plan and adapt their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were provided with excellent opportunities to write instructions. Work was carefully tailored to help pupils improve their independent writing. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress in developing their knowledge of number facts and multiplication because the tasks were skilfully designed to meet their specific needs and abilities. The staff have devised an outstanding curriculum which provides a rich

programme of activities and lessons that are of enormous benefit to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils thrive on the wide range of educational visits that extends their learning beyond the classroom. Specially themed topics, such as the Edwardian day to commemorate the school's centenary, and topics that skilfully link subjects serve to broaden pupils' interests and enthusiasm for learning. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to contribute to their community and learn about a wide range of customs and religions through special cultural events shared with parents. The school helps pupils to support the wider community through fund raising and improving the local environment, for example, through Eco projects and recycling. Pupils extend their knowledge of other cultures, world religions, festivals and customs and these are reinforced by visits to places of worship. Extra-curricular clubs and activities add interest and enjoyment to learning, including the innovative 'Film Club' where pupils learn to produce and direct short films, so improving and adding to their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Healthy lunches, ECO projects and the national Active Mark award demonstrate the pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe.

Governors are a real asset and make a good contribution to the school and its community. Together with the leadership team and staff they seek parents' views and keep them very well informed. Pupils' views are also sought and their involvement as school councillors enables them, along with their parents, to play a full part in helping the school to develop. The school's capacity to keep on improving is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The pace of learning is good so that Nursery and Reception children successfully develop their confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. They achieve well because the teaching, care and support are consistently good and effective. Even though standards are below those expected by the time the children join Year 1, particularly in language and communication, this represents good achievement in relation to their low starting points. The children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development, reaching the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. This is because the staff are very good at valuing the children's efforts and making them feel at ease in a supportive and stimulating learning environment. Children thoroughly enjoy the challenges of designing, cutting and pasting elephant masks in the Nursery or listening to and making different sounds using musical instruments in the Reception year. The staff make good use of indoor and outdoor resources, including garden areas, although the addition of a covered area would further extend opportunities for the children to enjoy the outdoors. Children improvise and communicate well with others during role-play. The staff are good at helping the children to develop early reading, writing, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills, although there remain gaps in the development of some children's language and communication skills when they start Year 1. Nursery staff incorporate interesting tasks for the children to engage in, such as making vegetable soup or celebrating special events by making interesting patterns and calendars to celebrate Diwali's festival of light. Many Reception children recognise their own name and letters with a range of challenging tasks that help them to reinforce their knowledge of letter sounds and early reading skills. The staff are vigilant and keep good records of the children's all round development, although there is scope to improve and sharpen assessment to ensure that they all reach their predicted targets, especially in language and communication. There are good opportunities for the children to reflect on their work and to ask questions, which is

successful in extending their thinking and learning. Parents think highly of the EYFS provision. This is reflected in many paying tribute to the efforts of the staff and headteacher in ensuring that their children get off to a good start.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve boys' attainment in reading in Years 1 and 2.
- Check more rigorously children's progress in the EYFS to ensure they all reach their expected targets.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wyvern School, Milton Keynes, MK12 5HU

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. You made us feel very welcome. Yours is a good school. You all work very hard with your teachers and I agree with the many parents who say that your school is a good place to learn and play. Your artwork is fantastic and we were very impressed with the high quality of displays in your classrooms and corridors. There are many good things about your school so it is hard for us to pick out the very best. However, these are just a few of the ones we were pleased with most:

- you are extremely well behaved, polite and considerate
- your teachers are good at helping you improve your reading, writing, mathematics and science work
- you enjoy school and we can see why; there are lots of interesting things to do
- we were impressed with the school council and the way you all come with good ideas to make your school even better
- your parents are very pleased with you and all the staff and the school works very closely with them
- the staff take really good care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy
- the headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help more boys do better with their reading and to give you all more opportunities to read widely
- check how well the youngest children are doing in the Nursery and Reception classes to make sure they all do as well as they can.

Well done, keep trying hard and come to school every day if you are able to help your school to even greater things. We wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector