

Waterbeach Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110621
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310366
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Naomi Wright
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	High Street Waterbeach Cambridge CB5 9JU
Telephone number	01223 718988
Fax number	01223 718989

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most schools. Because about a third of pupils come from the local army camp, a key feature of the school is the high number of children who join and leave it at various points during the school year, particularly in the early years, because of the posting elsewhere of individual army families. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low but this is deceptive because it does not truly reflect the wide range of pupils' social and economic backgrounds. The school population is mainly White British. There are a small number of bi-lingual pupils, who are developing their fluency in English, members of the Travelling communities and pupils who are looked after. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is average but the overall percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to Reception is overall below age-related expectations especially in aspects of literacy. The school is involved in a healthy schools project and works closely with local schools. The school is a focus for a range of community activities some of which extend the school's provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides excellent value for money. A pupil motto used around the school gives a neat summation of the school's strengths, although not of the depth and quality of the provision. 'Our school is fun with lots to do. If you join us we'll look after you'. Pupils are happy, enjoy school and thrive in the warmth and security of its ethos; they play and work hard with zest and enthusiasm. They make exceptional progress in their personal development, gaining in their maturity and sense of responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the school community. They make good and improving progress academically to attain standards that were well above average in the 2007 tests. Pupils achieve very well over their time in school. The previous report judged that the school provided a good education for its pupils and it has gone on to improve very significantly since then.

The key factor in this ongoing improvement is the outstanding quality of the headteacher's leadership. She is keenly aware of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to enhance its provision. She makes extremely good use of a range of targets to ensure this improvement. Improvement has accelerated in the last couple of years because of the effect of school restructuring and the opportunity to recruit staff. The strength of the school lies in the high quality of all its staff who are united in their professionalism and purpose and share the headteacher's commitment and vision for the school. There is excellent capacity to make further improvements. Teaching is excellent because pupils now have consistently good and often outstanding classroom experiences. Pupils are seen as partners in the learning process. Finding ways to extend this partnership by enhancing pupils' contribution to their learning is a further challenge. Team and subject leaders track all pupils' progress carefully. Any child who is underachieving is identified early and appropriate support provided. Rising standards and improving progress of pupils are testimony to the effectiveness of the teaching and school systems. The improvement has also fuelled the evident optimism of the staff and the sense that the school has begun a new phase in its development.

The majority of parents' questionnaires were positive about the school, reflecting the view that it is a 'happy place' with staff who are 'very caring' where their child is 'made very welcome.' Although a minority of parents had some broad concerns, for example, about class sizes or mixed age classes, which tarnished their view of the school the evidence shows that their concerns are unfounded. Whilst governance is good, it is evident that parents are not clear about the role of governors. The governing body has a stronger role to play in improving the communications with parents by explaining the reasons behind decisions and what actions it has taken about specific concerns.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Whilst there are exceptions, overall, children start school with standards that are below expectations particularly in language development. They make good progress and by the end of their Reception year, most are working well within the standards set nationally for children of this age, with a few meeting them. They relate well to each other and make good progress in their social development. Personal development is good. They behave well and play happily together. The quality of teaching is good. Activities are interesting and well matched to their needs. All adults work well to support learning although there could be more focused interaction between adults and children in the outdoor area and children could be encouraged to take

even more responsibility for their own choices. There are good relationships between children and carers. Welfare is promoted well. The school provides a safe and supportive environment and all staff show commitment to promoting children's needs. There is strong leadership and teamwork. There are very good links with parents and feeder playgroups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the communication between the governing body and parents.
- Seek ways to enhance pupils as partners in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average with an improving trend in writing. Pupils achieve well given their starting point and make good progress. This good progress continues in the upper part of the school and standards, typically above average were, in 2007, well above average. Given their starting point, these pupils achieved very well. Standards were above average in English, and well above in mathematics. Standards in science were exceptionally high. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well, reflected in the percentage gaining the higher level 5 in the tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress against their targets because of the consistent professional support and careful individual analysis of need. A similar approach ensures that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with English as an additional language and potentially vulnerable pupils achieve very well. School data and observations indicate that this improvement in standards is not simply a one-off due to the nature of the cohort but is a structured and sustainable improvement. The school monitors and evaluates the performance of all pupils very carefully and analyses results of tests to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to establish challenging targets for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school a great deal and take advantage of the opportunities it provides. They feel safe because of the 'golden rules' and report there is very little bullying. They are confident that if it does occur it would be 'sorted.' Pupils attend regularly, their attendance is around the national average and there are robust systems to encourage good attendance. They behave well and behaviour improves as they move through the school because of the highly skilled implementation and positive nature of the behaviour policy. They demonstrate high levels of consideration and sensitivity towards the feelings and opinions of others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have good respect for other cultures the pupils from army families often bring a wider world-view, and very strong feelings against racism. Pupils develop considerable maturity towards disability, celebrate their classes' diversity and are very friendly and welcoming because the school is so inclusive. They have an excellent understanding of healthy eating and lifestyles. Pupils respond extremely well to responsibility and are very highly involved in the school and wider community. Through the school council, they feel they have a voice in the school. They develop a mature appreciation about the importance of learning and the choices it opens up in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Lessons have clear objectives, are planned in detail and carefully target pupils' needs. Pupils are both stimulated and motivated to learn because lessons are taught with high levels of classroom and subject expertise, coupled with zeal and enthusiasm. In addition, the extremely good relations between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils are given the necessary confidence and support. Staff manage behaviour very skilfully in a positive manner. Learning support assistants have considerable expertise and engage with groups and individuals extremely well. Pupils are encouraged to be partners in the learning process. They are confident to say if they do not understand, mistakes are used very positively and adults work extremely hard to foster their confidence. A challenge for the school is finding ways to extend this partnership approach, so that pupils bring even more personal commitment and energy to their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school and develop good self-esteem and confidence because the school provides them with wide ranging opportunities to experience success, be it in the girls' football squad or on the stage in the Christmas production. There is appropriate focus on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT) which has led to the raising of standards in these core experiences and this is managed without neglecting other equally important aspects. A particular strength of the school is the provision for pupils' personal development which is outstanding. Pupils are taught very effectively how to live safely and healthily and to reflect sensitively on their own and others feelings and emotions. There is very good provision for creative subjects and an excellent range of enrichment activities with a very high attendance at the clubs after school. Pupils are very well prepared for future life by the focus on the multi-cultural nature of our society and the world of work, for example through the enterprise activities and the careers week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff know the pupils extremely well and there is excellent analysis of need and extra support for those pupils who need it. Provision for pupils with LDD is very high quality, enabling them to make excellent progress against their targets. One parent wrote 'we are delighted with the progress our child has made at the school and above all with the attitude and understanding of all those involved'. There are particularly good links with outside agencies and specialist teachers and the school uses a large range of strategies to support, boost and extend all pupils. The procedures for monitoring, preventing and dealing with bullying and any incidents of racism are exemplary, with the result that such incidents are very infrequent. Child protection and safeguarding procedures and training are robust. There are excellent systems to track academic progress. There is an excellent working relationship with the local regiment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership and are deeply committed to the pupils. The headteacher has a keen eye in ensuring that the conditions for pupils and staff are right so that they can flourish, with the single mindedness to ensure that pupils get the best possible deal. The headteacher leads from the front, working alongside staff and pupils. Because of this, she knows the pupils and their needs, and has exceptional clarity about what needs to be done to take the school further. The headteacher manages to meet the competing demands of pupils' needs by careful and creative deployment of staff and juggles very effectively financial priorities, ensuring that the money is spent astutely to best effect. The assessment systems are a key factor in raising attainment. The restructuring of the school's leadership and the creation of team and subject leaders provides a depth of excellent leadership across the school. There is a very strong sense of teamwork, accountability and mutual support. Governance is good. There is a wide range of expertise on the governing body; it provides strategic direction, and is confident to provide both support and challenge but it needs to do more to raise its profile and communication with parents.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

3 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterbeach Community Primary School, Waterbeach, CB5 9JU

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. My particular thanks to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. We found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you our findings.

We think that this is an outstanding school. There is a school motto on the school's website, possibly written by one of you, which sums up why: 'Our school is fun with lots to do. If you join us we'll look after you'. We think teachers work extremely hard to ensure that what you do is interesting and fun and all adults look after you extremely well. There are lots of clubs, school productions, trips and all kinds of things to help you enjoy learning. Teachers keep a very close eye on how you are doing and provide you with additional help if you need it. You work hard and make good progress because of the very high quality of teaching you get. As a result, the Year 6 SATs last year were well above average and pupils did particularly well in science. Teachers encourage you to tell them if you don't understand something and we have asked them to think about how you can take even more responsibility for improving your work. Your headteacher provides excellent leadership but we thought that other members of staff who take responsibility for subjects or aspects of the school provide excellent leadership too. We think that the governors are doing a good job but have asked them to think how they can let your parents know more about the school and the decisions they have made and why.

It is also an outstanding school because of you and your contributions to it. You look after each other well. You are welcoming to new pupils and you do help them settle in. You behave well. You take your responsibilities very seriously. It was good to hear that you feel safe in school and that you would turn to an adult if you had a problem. You also told us that there was very little bullying and were confident that if it happened the school would stop it quickly. We were impressed with the speed that you seemed to grow up and the confidence that you have.

All good wishes to you all in your future school careers.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector