

# Wetheridge Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113384
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311243
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Greenwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Duncan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 April 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fore Street Wetheridge Tiverton EX16 8AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01884 860518
<b>Fax number</b>	01884 860518

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small school draws its pupils from Witheridge and the surrounding rural area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. Of these, four have statements of special educational need, a slightly higher proportion than in most schools. Pupil mobility is similar to the national average. The school shares a site with the independent pre-school which most children attend prior to entering the Reception class. The school gained the Healthy School award in 2007.

## 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 provides a satisfactory education. Pupils enjoy school. They value the close relationships which bind the community and they feel very secure. Parents are very committed to the school. As one said, 'The school does an excellent job. They care for the children's learning needs and also listen to their opinions.'

There are considerable variations in prior learning and individual needs with each intake of pupils. In most years, children have below-average skills when they join Reception. They make good progress, so that, when they enter Year 1, most are working within the expected levels. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics fluctuate considerably. At their best, as in 2007, they are broadly average. Currently, there are relative weaknesses in writing and science because expectations are not as high as they might be, especially for more-able pupils. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. Over time, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Achievement is erratic but broadly satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, but much more consistent, and largely good, in Years 5 and 6. Those who join the school partway through their primary education do less well than others. The school did not achieve its targets in 2007. Although they receive broadly satisfactory support, a few pupils with learning difficulties, particularly recent arrivals, make less progress than they should. The few pupils learning English as an additional language receive satisfactory support and make steady progress in learning English.

Inconsistencies in achievement reflect variations in the quality of teaching. There is a body of good teaching, but some lessons have insufficient pace and challenge. Expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are not high enough. Assessment information is not always used effectively to guide lesson planning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils behave well. Relationships are good. Good sporting provision and a good awareness of diet give pupils a secure understanding of how to live healthily. Their awareness of keeping safe is also developing well. While pupils develop sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy by Year 6, they do not make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) to extend their learning. Pupils have too little awareness of cultural diversity. The school has good links with its partner secondary school and the pre-school.

The school provides good pastoral care and support. Academic guidance is not as strong. Not all staff are equally diligent in implementing the system of individual targets and the marking of pupils' work does not always provide a clear indication of what they need to do in order to reach their targets.

Leadership and management by the headteacher are satisfactory. Although the school has an overly positive view of some aspects of its performance, the headteacher has a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governance is satisfactory. With staff now ready to accept greater responsibility, more management time available to the headteacher and a model of effective practice in the recent whole-school input to writing, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start in Reception with skills which vary widely but which are usually below the expected level. Last year, children achieved particularly well in Reception so that, when they joined Year 1, many exceeded the expected level in personal and social development and in mathematical and language development, aspects rightly prioritised by staff. However, their skills were weaker in physical and creative development. The current Reception children entered school at a significantly lower level but are making good progress as a result of good teaching, underpinned by rigorous assessment and planning. A key strength is the good partnership with the pre-school. This facilitates common approaches to assessment and the development of early skills in language and mathematics, and underpins increasingly brisk progress. Children show good independence, confidently engage with visitors and initiate activities, sustaining concentration well. The environment is stimulating, if a little cramped, and relationships are positive.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and impact of teaching, by providing more challenging activities in lessons and expecting higher standards, particularly in pupils' written work, so that all pupils achieve at a faster and more consistent pace.
- Build more effectively on the good start children now have in Reception so that standards are raised in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing and science.
- Make sure that teachers' marking is closely linked to pupils' targets so that pupils always know how they can improve their work.

A small proportion of 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

Numbers in each year group are low and standards vary considerably from year to year. In the best years, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, although they are often lower. Current standards are slightly below average, with weaker performance in writing and science. Pupils' recorded work shows that the good start in Reception is not built upon sufficiently in Years 1 and 2. In Year 6, standards are more consistent and are broadly average. Achievement from Year 3 to Year 6 is satisfactory, although particularly effective teaching ensures good achievement for most pupils in the final two years. Pupils with learning difficulties make broadly satisfactory progress. However, there is occasional underperformance by a few individuals, particularly those who join the school partway through their primary education.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils feel secure and valued. They are confident, friendly and cooperative. They behave well and there have been no recent exclusions. Attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools and the school monitors it well. Pupils conduct themselves safely, coping well with the challenges of the outdoor play area. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory; their social development is particularly good. However, pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary Britain is too limited. Pupils make a good contribution to

the school community through the school council and various posts of responsibility. Opportunities to engage with the wider community are more limited. Pupils develop sound skills that contribute to their future economic well-being, mainly through fundraising and managing the school council budget, although they have insufficient opportunities to apply their good ICT skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Lessons are planned well and successfully promote basic language and social skills. Relationships are good. In Years 1 to 6, while there is some good teaching, too many lessons are still only satisfactory, lacking pace and challenge, and leading to inconsistent learning. Expectations for handwriting and the presentation of work are not high enough. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to plan challenging work. While the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly satisfactory, a few do not make sufficient progress. Teachers indicate to pupils what they want them to learn and how to judge their success. Self-assessment is well developed. However, marking does not always show what pupils need to do to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets current needs satisfactorily. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the areas of learning well, giving priority to aspects such as physical and creative development, where children achieve less well. While the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is now organised thematically, the provision for older pupils has yet to be reviewed. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their good ICT skills in other subjects or to apply their writing skills in science. The teaching of handwriting does not have sufficient priority. Support for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, and this is evident in their good attitudes to learning. The teaching of French is well established.

The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties is appropriately focused on what they need to learn to improve. Provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities is good. Residential visits, which enhance pupils' personal development well, are a strength. Pupils identified as gifted or talented are satisfactorily supported.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare well. The school has good links with external agencies. While the support that pupils with learning difficulties receive from teaching assistants is satisfactory, the school recognises the need to evaluate individual progress more rigorously. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Detailed tracking systems enable staff to monitor individual progress. However, whilst pupils have individual improvement targets in literacy and numeracy and are generally aware of them, these are not implemented rigorously in all classes and not all marking is effectively linked to targets. As a result, pupils do not always know how they can improve their work, and this affects their achievement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Although, in its self-evaluation, the school has taken an over-optimistic view of its performance, it has accurately identified several key areas for development. For example, underperformance in writing has been tackled and decisive action is leading to steady improvement. Much has been done to support pupils' personal development. However, the school has been slower to tackle the variable quality of teaching. Monitoring of lessons is not always sufficiently incisive to enable weaker features to be improved. Presentation of work and the use of ICT in other subjects were concerns at the last inspection, as they are now. Until recently, the headteacher has had a significant teaching load which has limited the time available for management tasks. Subject leaders are increasingly effective and able to lead initiatives in, for example, literacy. Responsibilities are now better distributed. Governors fulfil their legal obligations satisfactorily. However, they do not hold the headteacher sufficiently to account for the school's performance.

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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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Witheridge C of E Primary School, Tiverton, Devon EX16 8AH

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. You are very interested in meeting visitors and we enjoyed talking to you. We could see that you are proud of your school and that you really appreciate what the staff do for you. We were impressed by how well you care for each other. We felt that Witheridge C of E Primary is a satisfactory school.

The main things that we found are these:

- You behave well in lessons and generally work hard.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- All of the teaching is at least satisfactory and some of it is good. While you make good progress in some lessons, you need to learn at a brisk pace in all of them, so that you reach higher standards.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well. You understand how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise.
- The curriculum is satisfactory. You particularly enjoy art and the way in which the play area has been redeveloped.
- Those in charge of the school make sure it runs smoothly at present and know what to do to improve it still further.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that it is even more effective:

- Make sure that the teaching really helps you to make rapid and consistent progress by providing challenging activities in lessons and setting higher standards for your written work.
- Build on the good start children get in Reception to make sure that standards rise further in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing and science.
- Make sure that teachers' marking is closely linked to your targets so that you always know how you can improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead inspector

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