

Wimbish Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114990
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311780
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	57
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 Lorna Mufty
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Spain
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tye Green Wimbish Saffron Walden Essex CB10 2XE
Telephone number	01799 599245
Fax number	01799 599029

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wimbish Primary School is much smaller than average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English. The proportion of pupils with specific learning difficulties and behavioural and emotional difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average and increasing year on year. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school serves the nearby Army barracks, the village and surrounding area. Eighty per cent of pupils come from the barracks. The school has exceptionally high proportions of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the year. Only a small percentage of pupils spend their entire school life at Wimbish. The school has attained the Healthy Schools Award and the International Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wimbish Primary is providing its pupils with a satisfactory education. The parents are very supportive and have confidence in the school. One wrote, 'We are rather spoilt to have such a lovely school.' One of the strengths of leadership and management is the way it has forged links with the local and international community, including its links with a school in Nepal. The school participates in village functions, and the local community is actively encouraged to come along to school for events through the year such as the spring fair, and a helpers' tea party to celebrate Mothering Sunday. As a result of all these activities, community cohesion is good.

The standards attained at Wimbish Primary are below average, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. The learning of many pupils is disrupted because they move schools so often and lack the stability required to make good progress. In the years when the school roll is more stable and pupils stay for extended periods progress is better though still within the satisfactory band. Within this satisfactory picture there are some inconsistencies. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT), but a lack of challenge for the more able in some other subjects, particularly in mathematics, means some do not do as well they might. Teachers do not always select appropriate activities which challenge pupils and enable them to make good progress. Progress through EYFS is good as a result of consistently good provision, and pupils who need extra help with their learning also do well because of the good support they receive in lessons.

Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, the quality of subject leadership is variable and generally there is insufficient focus on raising standards and achievement, but particularly in mathematics. However, the school has successfully turned a concern about standards in ICT at the time of the previous inspection into a strength now, and provision for the EYFS is good, indicating that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Strong care, guidance and support and the good curriculum ensure that pupils grow into confident, well-adjusted citizens. The topic based approach to the way subjects are taught helps to motivate pupils. The curriculum is very responsive to local circumstances and ensures that it utilises the school's location through visits to nearby places of interest. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their leadership skills, work as part of a team, and take on responsibilities through the school council and by participating in a variety of sporting tournaments and competitions. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They behave well and enjoy their education. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are good. Good assemblies enable pupils to reflect upon the situation of other members of their community, for example, the blind and deaf.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age, although there is significant variation between different years. At the end of the EYFS, standards also vary from year to year from below to above average. However, very effective monitoring procedures show that children make good progress from their different starting points. Achievement is good. Teaching is good and provides a wide range of activities for children to follow. Planning shows very clearly how all the different areas of learning are addressed through

interesting topics. The Reception teacher is knowledgeable and has effectively introduced the new EYFS Framework. She is skilled at developing children's basic literacy skills, through effective teaching of letters and sounds. Teaching assistants are used effectively both to support children's learning and to share in the process of assessing what they know and can do. The curriculum is well planned and provides good opportunities for learning through play in the classrooms and in the outside activity area. There are plans in place to ensure that the outside area can be used more effectively during periods of inclement weather. Care and welfare procedures are very effective. The leadership of the EYFS is good. Effective practice ensures that there is a seamless transition into Year 1. There is a clear view of how the EYFS should develop.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make, ensuring that the higher attainers are challenged effectively across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the leadership and management of subject areas so that there is a sustained focus on raising standards and achievement.

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

The standards achieved from year to year are subject to large fluctuations because of the small numbers in each year group, but are generally below average. In the assessments at Key Stage 1 in 2008 standards were exceptionally low with reading performing least well although this still represents satisfactory progress from these pupils' very low starting points. Provisional results for 2008 at the end of Year 6 indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science were below average and achievement was satisfactory from their starting points. The small minority of pupils who have the stability of extended stays at the school achieve better progress in many subjects. In mathematics higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and they do not achieve as well as they should. Individual education plans and clear targets ensure that those pupils with specific learning difficulties and behavioural and emotional difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Behaviour is good both in and out of classrooms. Attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe and secure. They know which foods are healthy and enjoy eating the fruit on offer at lunchtime. One pupil said, 'I really love kiwi.' There is an effective school council. Members proudly spoke about the 'Green Pledge Committee' and the role it plays in ensuring that the school recycles properly. They also explained how the council organises fund raising. They have raised money for books to send to their twin school in Nepal. There are other regular opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school as monitors, for example in assembly, and as classroom helpers. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community. They have sung for older local residents at Christmas, taken part in local church events, and danced around the Maypole at the local village festival. These activities

enable pupils to develop into confident young citizens. Overall preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While some lessons motivate pupils through brisk and enthusiastic teaching they are not all of this quality. Opportunities are missed for pupils to work together in pairs and groups independently and teachers spend too much time talking to pupils, making them passive learners. This affects the pace of learning and results in pupils not having sufficient time to complete the work set for them in class. Pupils enjoy joining in tasks and answering questions when they challenge their thinking. Teachers use praise well. In some lessons, teaching makes it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and the activities provided ensure pupils do their best. Electronic whiteboards are not used consistently well enough to hold pupils' attention. Targets are in place for English and mathematics, but pupils capable of working at higher levels are not always adequately challenged to reach them. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Marking, although regular and providing feedback on the accuracy of work, inconsistently provides guidance as to what pupils can do to improve it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' personal development. Considering the size of the school, it does well to provide numerous extra-curricular clubs. For example, pupils enjoy the computer and animation club, football, cross-country, netball and dancercise. All pupils in Years 2 and 3 learn German while those in Years 4, 5 and 6 learn French. Special curricular events are organised, for example science week and art week. These events enrich the curriculum well. All Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils receive instrumental tuition as part of the music curriculum. Partnership links with the local secondary school ensure that pupils benefit from high quality sports coaching which they enjoy. Opportunities to explore the local environment are integrated well into the curriculum. For example, visits to the local church and the study of local history. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills in ICT. Cross-curricular work is developing well and makes learning more meaningful and fun. For example literacy, history and art were linked well together when pupils worked on Shakespeare plays and the Tudors. Visits to the Tate Gallery and the Globe Theatre contributed well to this work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are helped to build their confidence and self-esteem with the result that they feel happy, confident and secure. Pupils know who to go to if they have any problems and know that things will be dealt with effectively. The school is particularly adept at ensuring that new pupils, of which there are many, settle quickly into life at Wimbish. Parents, who are very complimentary about the school, say their children are very well cared for and one wrote, 'My child has settled very well into this school. He has never settled better into a school than Wimbish and this can only be credited to the staff and their approach to our children.'

The system used to track pupils' progress is easy for staff to use and effectively pinpoints those pupils in need of early intervention. The support staff give them helps them to make good progress towards their targets. Pupils know and understand their targets, even the youngest children. However, teachers' marking does not always inform pupils whether they have reached them. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils are up to date and meet requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the headteacher is a strength. She appreciates the challenges facing the school, provides clear direction and ensures that staff are provided with support and training. However, although professional development has been provided it has had insufficient impact on improving practice. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to improvement. However, subject leadership is relatively weaker, especially in mathematics. Action plans across subjects are not of consistently good quality and this results in inconsistent achievement across subjects. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching, planning and pupil's work is diligent and enables her to pinpoint the professional development required by staff. The stability of governance is affected by frequent changes of personnel as parents move in and out of the local area. However, they carry out their duties satisfactorily and support the school in its work.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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/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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

4 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wimbish Primary School, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2XE

I enjoyed my visit to your school when I inspected it recently and found that you receive a satisfactory education. I found you to be polite and courteous and thank you for your warm welcome. I enjoyed listening to all the exciting activities you are able to take part in. I especially liked hearing about the animation and computer club. I was delighted to hear that you enjoy school and was pleased to hear about the work of the school council. Making sure that we all recycle things is very important!

You told me how important it was to learn ICT skills for your future work and said how much you like the electronic whiteboards in your classroom. You do lots of good work in the community too, such as singing for local older people and inviting them to share harvest celebrations. It is highly commendable that you care for other people. Well done!

Your headteacher works very hard to ensure that you all settle well into school, especially those of you who arrive in the middle of a year. Most of you make satisfactory progress in your subjects and some of you make good progress, especially the youngest children. Some of you don't make as much progress as you should because the work you receive does not make you think hard enough, especially in mathematics. I have asked the school to make sure you all receive work which makes you think hard so that you make good progress. Finally I have asked that the teachers who are in charge of each of your subjects focus on ensuring that you all do better in your work so you can achieve better results in national tests.

Once again, thank you for helping to make our visit such a pleasant one. I wish you and your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector