

Wallisdean Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115893
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312095
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Dukes

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Evelyn Wrixon
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Cammish
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Wallisdean Avenue Fareham PO14 1HT
Telephone number	01329 280827
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Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils at this smaller than average school are of White British heritage with a small number from other, mostly Asian, backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above that found nationally, many of whom have moderate learning difficulties. In addition, four pupils with hearing impairment attend the adjacent separately managed unit. The school has achieved a Healthy Schools Award, the Active Schools Mark and Investors in People status. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January and a new headteacher at Easter.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wallisdean Infant is a satisfactory school. Emerging from a period of disruption caused by high levels of staff turnover, it is now showing clear improvement. Over recent years, staffing problems have led to pupils underachieving and standards declining. This is beginning to be addressed by the school. While standards are significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress and, taking account of the especially low starting points of this group of pupils, achievement is now satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, progress has improved but is uneven, and the school has still further to go. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good; they behave well and are strong advocates of healthy lifestyles.

The strong leadership of the new headteacher and her deputy is providing a clear vision and focus on improvement. Leaders have produced a brief, provisional improvement plan and rightly intend to expand it to become more comprehensive. Their evaluations of the school are satisfactory but their systems of monitoring are not yet fully rigorous. Leaders' initial actions have had an immediate impact on accelerating the achievement and progress of pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties and hearing impairment. Key actions have been in staff mentoring to improve the quality of teaching and in raising the levels of challenge in teaching. Consequently, teaching and learning are now satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well. They provide a high standard of pastoral care and pupils appreciate this. As one said, 'We like school because teachers look after us well.' However, teachers do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. The school enjoys good links with partner schools, pre-schools and outside agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. In this caring climate pupils develop a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles and they enjoy school a lot. However, attendance is only satisfactory because some families take holidays in term time. Pupils behave well and know how to keep safe. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community through charitable fund raising and helping around the school as buddies and school council members. They are developing their basic skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily.

Subject leaders are not yet fully effective because new leadership teams are not yet monitoring and supporting their subjects sufficiently. Governors make a satisfactory contribution and they are well involved in the life of the school. Recent improvements show that leaders have developed the school's capacity for improvement, and this is now satisfactory. The curriculum caters for personal development well but is not yet leading to good progress in literacy and numeracy. Assessment is inconsistent in its accuracy and use. This restricts the tracking of pupils' progress and the ability of teachers to set challenging targets. As a result, those pupils with less challenging targets do not achieve as well as they might.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and virtually all feel it is well led and managed. As one parent said, 'Since the new headteacher has arrived, the school has been absolutely fantastic.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle happily into school. They feel secure and quickly gain in confidence. They cooperate well with others and their personal and social development is good. Most children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age but this fluctuates year on

year. Their attainment is below average when they leave the Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress because teachers plan activities well to stimulate children's curiosity and promote their independence. The daily 'Letters and Sounds' programme is making a positive contribution to developing children's reading skills. The Foundation Stage has recently undergone changes to staffing and, while teaching and learning are satisfactory at present, there are strengths. Although there is generally a balance between adult led activities and opportunities for children to explore for themselves, this is inconsistent. Teachers do not always use questioning sufficiently to extend children's thinking and, sometimes, they keep children sitting on the carpet too long. As a result, they lose concentration and interest. Positive relationships are established with parents and carers and there are good arrangements to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teaching has a greater impact on accelerating the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics in order to raise standards.
- Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation so that the school has a clearer picture of its strengths and weaknesses and plans effectively to raise standards.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement, from their starting points is satisfactory. However, achievement has been inadequate in some classes in recent years linked to high levels of staff turnover. This has been a concern for some parents. Progress has improved in Years 1 and 2 over the past two terms because of successful strategies adopted and improvements to teaching. Although current standards in Year 2 are well below average, these pupils had particularly low starting points and they are making satisfactory progress. They are mostly on track to reach their challenging targets. Pupils with hearing impairment, those with moderate learning difficulties and others with LDD achieve as well as their peers because teachers plan adequately for their needs. In addition, learning assistants support these pupils well by giving extra encouragement and explanation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and clearly enjoy school a great deal. They and their parents believe that behaviour is good and there is little bullying and inspectors agree. They know they can go to teachers if there is a problem. Pupils understand how to keep safe. They practise healthy eating and are enthusiastic about physical activity. 'Play Buddies' ensure that no one is left alone or upset at playtime. For example, a Buddy was seen placing an arm around a tearful child and escorting him to a teacher. The school council helps pupils to learn to consult and take on responsibilities. They enjoy deciding how to spend the budget given to them and this gives them experience of financial planning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

is good. They are serious and thoughtful in assembly. Their knowledge of world faiths and cultures is underdeveloped.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have improved but there remains too much variation in the quality of lessons. For example, alongside good lessons in the school there are others where teachers do not match their work well to the needs of pupils and their expectations are too low, resulting in slowed progress. Teachers use interactive white boards well to make learning exciting. Some teachers are not yet using the school's new assessment procedures effectively in their planning resulting in work which is not well matched to the pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable but there are pockets of good practice in the use of 'Two stars and a wish' system. Teachers' procedures for marking are unwieldy and not easily used or understood by pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants work together effectively to ensure that pupils who need extra help quickly receive it. As one parent commented, 'The LSA has had a great impact on the progress of my child'. Staff form very good relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to develop in self-confidence and motivates them to try their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and enjoyable activities. Much of the curriculum is focused on imaginatively designed themes such as, 'Roving Reporters.' These encourage pupils' curiosity and help develop positive attitudes to learning. However, the curriculum for English and for mathematics, whilst satisfactory, is not yet helping pupils to progress well in those subjects. The school recognises there is more to do and some parents agree with this. The school provides a good programme to support pupils' personal development and social skills. Good features include a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported. Good use is made of visits to broaden pupils' experiences and visitors to school, such as theatre groups. The wide-ranging provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including the hearing-impaired pupils is good, as they are well supported and work is matched to their specific needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory. It is helping them to achieve satisfactorily, but could be more effective. The school has not yet fully implemented their tracking system and pupils' targets often lack challenge. As a result, pupils do not yet have clear enough guidance about how their work could become better. Staff show high commitment to care. Consequently, they have effective strategies for promoting pupils' health and safety and their good behaviour. Relationships are good between staff and pupils, creating a climate in which pupils grow in confidence. Arrangements for safeguarding are similarly rigorous. Staff provide sensitive and well-focused support for vulnerable pupils, including those with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a well-judged combination of withdrawal and in-class support provided by the learning support assistants. The school works effectively with a range of agencies, including the neighbouring junior school, to meet their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership of the new headteacher and deputy headteacher is driving the school to focus on raising standards. Recent years have seen substantial changes in staffing where almost all senior leaders have changed, along with many teachers. This turbulence led to a decline in standards in recent times. New school leaders have acted with urgency to reverse this decline by supporting teachers to improve their practice and by introducing new teaching strategies. These actions have begun to have a clear and positive effect on improving pupils' progress, but there is much more still to do. The school's leadership team will not be fully in place until next term, when there will be a full complement of staff. School leaders have not had enough time to establish rigorous systems for monitoring the work of the school. As a result, they do not have a complete picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are in the early stages of writing improvement plans but these are not yet fully developed to address properly the school's key priorities. Subject leadership is inconsistent due to staffing difficulties and is now being revised. School leaders have maintained a caring climate for pupils. They provide well for pupils' personal development and give high priority to meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet their statutory duties and hold the school to account well but they do not have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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

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

04 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Wallisdean Infant School, Fareham, PO14 1HT

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to the inspectors and for making us feel welcome. We found your school to be improving and providing you with a satisfactory education.

What we like about your school is that:

- you are helpful and you behave well
- you are keen to live healthy lives
- you enjoy school a lot
- you told us how well staff care for you.

We are really pleased that your school is improving. To help it become even better we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure their teaching is not too easy or too difficult for you, so that you make better progress in your learning
- check more carefully how well the school is doing so they can find better ways of helping you learn more
- make sure subject leaders help teachers so that their teaching in different subjects helps you learn more.

You can help by remembering your targets and working hard to reach them.

Thank you once again for an enjoyable visit to Wallisdean Infant. We wish you very good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Dukes

Lead Inspector