

Water Leys Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120079
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313506
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Pat Walsh HMI

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Crook
Headteacher	Denise Randell
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Guilford Drive Wigston Fields Wigston LE18 1HG
Telephone number	01162 884135
Fax number	01162 570719

Age group	4–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school and about one third of the pupils come from outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and many of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school has gained the Investor in People award and is recognised as an Eco School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. The majority of parents are happy with the school and hold the teachers in high regard. One parent echoed the views of many and commented, 'Everyone in the school cares for the children: there is a great team spirit'. The headteacher's good leadership skills, ably supported by the leadership team, are leading to improving standards and to pupils' good personal development. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Progress varies between classes because, although some lessons are good and occasionally outstanding, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school has identified writing as a weakness and has begun to tackle pupils' underachievement. It is too early to judge if the measures introduced, such as the 'Big Write', are improving pupils' skills in this area.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and a strength of the school. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards learning. They are well cared for and know that adults are keen to offer help and support. One child commented, 'When I am running, if I fall over there is always somebody there to pick me up'. They show a good awareness of issues related to healthy lifestyles and enjoy their involvement in sports activities. Their excellent contributions to the school and to local communities enrich their experience and, along with satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, help to ensure that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work.

Positive relationships are a strong feature of the work of the school. Pupils work well with adults and with each other. They have responded well to changes in the curriculum, where teachers have started to make stronger links between subjects. However, the planning for and implementation of these links are not consistent. Consequently, some lessons do not include an adequate level of interest and challenge for pupils, particularly the most able.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school knows what needs to be done to improve pupils' learning and the strategic planning is effective. The headteacher has developed an enthusiastic team that is committed to providing the best opportunities for pupils. However, some of the systems, such as whole-school target-setting, have not been in place long enough to improve pupils' achievement consistently.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children start the school they have particularly low levels of language, especially in speaking and writing. Their records show that their achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Children make progress in most of the areas of learning in line with other schools. Their overall personal development is good. They are keen to be involved in the well-planned activities, their relationships with each other are good and their behaviour is calm and purposeful. The teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory; they meet the children's needs and keep them actively engaged. Teachers provide well-structured role-play opportunities that have a positive influence on the children's language development. Early reading activities, including work on letter sounds, give the children a sound foundation for learning. However, there are too few opportunities for children to initiate their own play. Good arrangements exist to ensure their safety and health. Effective links with parents help to involve them in their children's education and they are kept well informed of their progress. Leaders of the Foundation Stage have an accurate understanding of what is going well and there are suitable plans to remedy weaknesses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for all pupils.
- Plan for more effective links between subjects in the curriculum.
- Ensure that lessons provide a suitable level of interest and challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able, so that they all achieve as well as they should.

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

On entry to the Foundation Stage, children have skills that are low compared to those typical for their age. A growing number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds start school at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' progress is satisfactory from entry to the end of Year 5, when they move to the local high school. Results in the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 2 show improvement, and standards are above average. Standards for ten-year-olds are broadly average and are higher in mathematics than they are in English. Writing is the weakest area across the school. A robust system for tracking pupils' progress by monitoring learning in all classes has already improved achievement but there is still some work to do in Years 3 to 5. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress owing to the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

As the children come into school in the morning, their cheerful faces, their positive attitudes and their relationships with each other make it obvious that they enjoy school. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their behaviour is good and this enables them to engage well with their learning. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and they enjoy paired work. This was summed up in a mathematics lesson when one pupil said, 'I like working with my friend because we can help each other'. Pupils feel very safe in school, know who to go to if they have any concerns and have a 'worry box' to ask for support from the school council. Pupils in Year 5 are trained as junior safety officers and are keen to give support to others in the playground. The school council is outstanding. Its members lead the charity work in the school and are keen to gather the views of all pupils. Projects have included developing the outside areas by introducing more play apparatus and tending the allotments. They introduced 'Fruit on Friday' last year and this was so popular that all children decided to have fruit every day. Pupils successfully lead the school's charity work, such as 'Send a Cow', and the Eco-schools Award, and are developing good personal qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons in all years are carefully structured with a clear purpose. Teachers and assistants work well together and lessons are calm and orderly. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' attentiveness and active involvement so discussions are usually lively and thoughtful. Activities are well organised. However, tasks do not always match the abilities or needs of all pupils closely enough, in particular those of the more able. As a result, some groups make uneven progress, particularly in Years 3 to 5. There are instances across the school where learning is good, and occasionally outstanding, because a brisk pace and stimulating activities excite pupils' interest. This reflects the school's focus on creativity but best practice has not been consistently shared. Teachers use marking to praise achievement and set targets for improvement but these are not always followed up rigorously enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Planning is sound and there are suitable programmes for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, cross-subject links are not a strong feature. Opportunities are missed to develop writing skills and pupils do not make enough use of information and communication technology. Provision for the arts has improved, correcting a weakness noted in the previous inspection, and all classes undertake art and craft projects. Learning is extended well through a wide range of special events, visits and visitors. These have a good effect on pupils' interest in school and strengthen links with the local community; for example, some parents join pupils in clubs to study Gujarati and Punjabi languages. Music is a strength and all Year 5 pupils learn to play a brass instrument. Imaginative use is made of the outdoor areas as a resource and pupils sell the produce from their allotment. French is a valuable addition to the curriculum and pupils are very pleased with their new knowledge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The quality of pastoral care is high. This is clearly demonstrated by the high level of commitment of all staff to promoting pupils' health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and regularly reviewed and risk assessments are completed conscientiously. All pupils are well supported, including those who find learning difficult and the growing number who are learning English as an additional language. Links with other agencies outside the school support the satisfactory progress made by all groups of learners.

Pupils receive satisfactory academic guidance to support their progress although systems for setting learning targets for improvement are not yet fully developed or applied consistently across the school. Pupils who need additional help are quickly identified and effective programmes are introduced to address their needs. The school works well with parents. Their views on homework are responded to promptly and reading homework throughout the school is carefully monitored

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's good capacity to raise standards and achievement is the result of the drive and commitment of the headteacher. Leaders have established a shared sense of purpose and direction for the school and all staff understand the part they need to play. Accurate evaluation of the school's weaknesses by the headteacher and the leadership team and the action they have taken have led to a clear upward trend. Leadership and management remain satisfactory because standards have not yet been raised enough. However, the ambitious targets set and the systematic checks made to improve teaching and learning are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Subject leaders are now more effective in identifying areas for improvement in their subjects and in planning action to remedy weaknesses. Governors are enthusiastic. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide satisfactory support and challenge.

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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	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 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	1
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	1
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

20 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Water Leys Primary School, Wigston Fields, LE18 1HG

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed looking around and meeting you, your teachers and teaching assistants and seeing what you achieve in school. We found talking to you very interesting and these discussions helped us to come to decisions about how good your school is. We were particularly impressed by the wonderful willow sculptures that you have worked together to make.

You told us that you feel safe and happy in school. You know a lot about staying fit and healthy. We saw how well you behave in lessons and on the playground. We know you are keen to help people in the community and we enjoyed looking at your allotment and buying some of the homegrown potatoes to take home. The school council is doing an excellent job in making sure that you all have the chance to work together to make a better school. I hope the new play area you are designing is fun.

All the staff work hard to help you learn as much as you can and the school is providing you with a satisfactory education. We think the targets that are set for you are beginning to help you to improve your work so that you are making satisfactory progress. Your teachers expect you to work hard all the time and this is starting to show in the results you achieve.

I have asked your headteacher, the teachers and the governors to make sure that the work you get in all classes is interesting and really makes you think hard. I have also asked them to help you to make your writing better by giving you plenty of interesting things to write about in all the different subjects. I am sure you will help by continuing to behave well and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Pat Walsh Her Majesty's Inspector



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