

Watlington Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120888
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313781
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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	185
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Ward
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Dowden
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	Rectory Lane Watlington King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 0HU
Telephone number	01553810468
Fax number	01553810468

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving local villages south of King's Lynn. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very few learning English as an additional language. The school has fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is typical in most schools. Few pupils have free school meals. Following a period of some staff changes the school has a new leadership team.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Watlington is a satisfactory school which has some good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. The school works effectively with pre-school providers and high schools to ensure pupils' well-being as they move from one setting to another. The new special educational needs coordinator has worked hard to forge helpful links with external services to benefit pupils with learning difficulties.

Teaching and pupils' achievement are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. The curriculum is satisfactory. Work is soundly planned in accordance with national guidance and this ensures that each year's work builds appropriately on the work of the previous year. Standards are broadly average and most pupils make satisfactory progress given their starting points. In 2006 pupils left school with results that were broadly average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In 2007, English results remained similar but mathematics and science improved. The 2007 results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in mathematics, average for reading but below average for writing. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently, especially in Year 1.

Good pastoral care contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and completely trust the adults in school to help them. Systems to ensure that pupils are safe in school are robust. Pupils enjoy school and parents appreciate this. As one parent wrote, 'My son thoroughly enjoys his schooling. He is constantly encouraged and responds well to this.' Academic guidance is satisfactory. Because teachers have only recently ensured that their assessment is accurate and kept a comprehensive check on each pupil's progress, expectations of what pupils could achieve are not consistently high enough. This means that while teachers are beginning to use their knowledge of individual pupils to modify work for pupils of different abilities, it is not always done effectively. Teachers are beginning to use specific targets in lessons to help pupils working at different levels, with varying degrees of success.

Leadership and management are sound at all levels. The sharply focused support of the local authority over the last year has helped staff to refocus their work on raising standards and improving teaching and the curriculum. Recently introduced systems for reviewing each pupil's progress are helping the school to identify the right priorities for improvement, although these are not fully reflected in the school improvement plan. The leadership team know what they need to do but do not always address priorities with sufficient urgency, or devise clear enough criteria to measure their success. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, with very good improvement in provision for children in the Foundation Stage, demonstrating that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to the Reception class are usually below national expectations for children of this age. Provision for this class has gradually improved over recent years. Good teaching and a good curriculum mean that children now make good progress. The teacher and teaching assistant have a clear understanding of how to meet the needs of such young children and quickly establish a sense of both security and fun for them. This means that children quickly develop the confidence to share their ideas and become actively involved in the interesting

activities available to them. There is a clear vision for future developments based on a clear and accurate evaluation of existing provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to write independently, particularly in Year 1.
- Ensure that all staff have equally high expectations of all pupils.
- Increase rigour and clarity in identifying how to measure the impact of school development and tackle priorities with greater urgency.

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

Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is in line with national expectations for this age. They make satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average, with a few more able pupils reaching higher National Curriculum levels. However, results in 2007 indicate that standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are below average. The school did not have secure systems for anticipating pupils' results soon enough to intervene and remedy individual difficulties.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are also broadly average. Until recently, standards had gradually declined for several years. In 2006, standards were average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. Most pupils made satisfactory progress, with the exception of higher attaining pupils. In 2007, the decline was halted; standards remained steady in English, but improved in mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils are now identified and increasingly challenging work is set for them. As a result all groups of pupils now make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school life and establish good relationships with one another and with their teachers. Attendance has improved considerably over the past year and is now average. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils act considerately and carefully. They recognise that the school helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils value being members of the school community and make a satisfactory contribution through expressing their views via the school council. They develop a sound understanding of life in the wider community through a range of trips and visits, links with organisations such as the local church and fund-raising activities. Pupils are given a sound preparation for their future years through their good social development and satisfactory progress in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong, so pupils are well motivated. Teachers are

well organised and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who find learning difficult. These features contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Teachers use national guidance to plan lessons that build satisfactorily on pupils' previous learning. Systems for accurately identifying what different pupils know, understand and can do are new. While teachers usually plan to meet differing needs within their class the extent and quality of this varies in practice, and not all teachers always have sufficiently high expectations of pupils. Teachers are increasingly helping pupils to focus their efforts through explaining what they are expected to learn. The use of individual targets to help pupils' learning varies in quality; they are most established in literacy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. Curriculum plans ensure a suitable balance between all subjects. The emphasis on developing pupils' core skills of literacy and numeracy and on personal, social and health education and citizenship means that the curriculum is appropriate to pupils' needs. Recent moves to develop a curriculum more focused on pupil enquiry are enabling pupils to become more responsible for their own learning, but these new approaches are not yet consistently in place in all classes. Curriculum enrichment is satisfactory. Trips and visits are organised, including residential opportunities for older pupils. Visitors to the school further enrich learning, for example, a 'rocket day' took place for Year 5 pupils during the inspection. Pupils take part enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities, but the range available to them is narrow, particularly for younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support for pupils are strengths and contribute to their confidence and good personal development. Parents believe their children are safe and well cared for. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. A significant number of parents are concerned that communication between them and the school could be improved. This has already been identified as an issue by the school and action is being taken to build on the satisfactory systems currently in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and the very small number who speak English as an additional language are helped to make sound progress towards the targets set for them. Pupils are given satisfactory guidance on their academic progress and how to improve their work. Recently enhanced systems to monitor pupils' progress are helping to identify needs, but the information is not used consistently well to support improvement in standards across all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Recent improvements in the school are due to the establishment and growing effectiveness of a new and extended leadership team. The school has received considerable help and direction from the local authority, which continues to maintain this partnership. There are adequate systems for reviewing what happens in the school, but many of these are new and it is too soon for them to have had a full impact upon improving teaching and raising standards. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. Very recently, subject leaders have made a good start to analysing strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The school is accurately identifying priorities for improvement, but they are not always clearly stated in written plans with well defined criteria

for measuring success. Action taken to address weaknesses is not always sufficiently prompt. Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors has an astute understanding of the school and provides discerning support. Systems for governors to monitor how well pupils are doing are very new so their benefit is yet to be fully felt.

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 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	3
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	3
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	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**

14 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Watlington Community Primary, Watlington, King's Lynn PE33 0HU

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work. A special thank you to the members of last year's school council who met with us in the library and the spare classroom. Here are some of the good things we found about your school.

- Children in the Reception class make good progress.
- Everyone works hard and behaves well in lessons and around the school.
- You enjoy school and are very good at taking care of each other.
- The adults care about you a good deal and work hard to keep you safe.
- You are confident that you have an adult to go to if you have a problem.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help those of you who find learning difficult.
- Your teachers have begun to plan more activities for you where you can use your own ideas.
- The headteacher and all the teachers want to keep making the school even better.

In order to help the school keep getting better we have asked your teachers to give you more chances to write down your own ideas. We have asked them to make sure that they always expect you to do your very best work – in every single lesson! We should like them to make sure they are always very clear about what they need to do to make the school even better and that when they have made decisions they deal with things quickly.

Thank you again for being so friendly and polite. We wish you every success in the future.

Jill Bavin

Lead Inspector