

# Watlington Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123032      |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Oxfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 314462      |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 1 July 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Steven Hill |

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>                | 3-11                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                               |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                     |
| School                                    | 285                                 |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Jane Shaw                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Angela Briggs                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 2 February 2004                     |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Love Lane<br>Watlington<br>OX49 5RB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01491 612474                        |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01491 613313                        |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how much progress pupils have made in the current school year, particularly the older pupils
- the accuracy of the school's evaluation of teaching
- the effectiveness of the school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and break-times; the school's documentation, particularly on pupils' achievements; interviews with staff, governors and pupils; results of national assessments; samples of pupils' work; and parental views as expressed in questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average, so some classes are mixed age. It serves a small town and some surrounding villages. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin with a home language of English. There is a small and varying number of Traveller pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average overall, but is higher in some older classes. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The mobility of pupils has a particular impact in some years, when a significant number of boys leave for the private sector. The 50-place Foundation Stage Unit caters for 40 full-time Reception aged children. In addition, ten Nursery aged children attend in the mornings, and another ten in the afternoons. There have been a number of changes to staffing in the current year, because of a mixture of promotions, secondments and maternity leave. The school has won a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. It now provides an excellent education for its pupils. As a result, their achievement and personal development are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and of what it provides for their children. Typically, one wrote, 'I cannot think of a better start to our children's education...it encourages our children to reach their potential both academically and socially, instilling strong values of right and wrong...We couldn't ask for more'. Pupils and parents alike appreciate the very good pastoral care provided, so that pupils feel safe and valued in the school, right from the excellent start they make in the Foundation Unit. Parents praise specifically the help given to pupils who struggle with their work, or who have had problems with relationships.

Parents' letters show they particularly value the work of the headteacher, whose determination to make continual improvements is matched by that of the strong team of staff she has established. Subject leaders and the senior leadership team provide very good support to colleagues, a major improvement since the last inspection. Their strong teamwork and the collaborative management systems in place have meant that staff have been able to take on new roles and responsibilities with no faltering in the excellent provision. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Governors have played a full part in driving improvement, which is one reason that the school is extremely well placed to improve further.

The work of all staff has helped to bring about the improved progress since the last inspection. Achievement had generally been good, and standards above average. Achievement has risen steeply during the last two years and is now outstanding. The standards reached in national assessments by Year 6 pupils in 2007 were exceptionally high. The progress made by this group, since they were in Year 2, placed them in the top 4% nationally. Attainment was particularly high in mathematics, following a focus on improving provision in the subject by the whole school. Boys and girls, including those who struggle with basic literacy and numeracy, all achieve at a similarly high rate. Traveller pupils also do very well, making excellent progress when they are in school.

Provisional results suggest that the current pupils in Year 6 have also reached high standards. This is despite a relatively high number of pupils with learning difficulties in this group. Rigorous monitoring of individuals' achievement shows that their progress has been excellent in the current school year. Pupils in Year 5 have also made extremely rapid progress this year, and are already attaining standards similar to those found nationally at the end of Year 6. Across the school, standards in writing, whilst above average, are not as high as in other subjects. They are rising, particularly in the current Year 6, because of innovative work by staff on assessment and on story-telling.

The excellent curriculum supports both improving achievement and pupils' outstanding personal development. They are extremely well prepared for their future lives, in school and out. A wide range of exciting and interesting activities contributes to pupils' high levels of enjoyment, extremely positive attitudes to learning, and their impeccable behaviour. All these are reflected in their high attendance. Art is a particular strength, shown by the range of high quality work in different media on display around the school.

A strong programme of personal, social and health education ensures that pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is very good, and they greatly enjoy sport, as well as the huge range of other extra-curricular activities on offer. Relationships are excellent, with each other and with

staff. The school council contributes very well to the life of the school, and pupils take great pride in their role in improving the environment, for example, and in the better school dinners. Older pupils take their responsibilities to younger ones very seriously, exemplified by their enthusiasm for the 'buddy' system, where they help pupils new to Year 1 to settle into the main school. Pupils also contribute well to the global community, for example through their support for pupils in Ghana and Kenya. The school promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures strongly and successfully, with their links to Poland and Germany through the Comenius project being just one example of this. Like their parents, pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Year 6 pupils agreed that 'Teachers make lessons fun...' '...everyone's really friendly to each other' and that they get '...lots of good opportunities'. They said there were no major elements that needed to improve, one saying 'Everything's perfect!'

The keys to pupils' excellent achievement are the outstanding teaching, and very effective academic support and guidance. Teaching has improved significantly because of very successful sharing of good practice between staff, in both planning and assessment. A rigorous programme of monitoring of lessons, giving clear feedback to colleagues to help them improve, contributes substantially. Teaching is characterised by excellent classroom management, backed up by positive relationships and clear expectations. Teachers are good at matching work to pupils' individual needs, based on the very thorough tracking of their achievements. The school's involvement in a national project to improve assessment has contributed considerably to this. Marking is excellent, giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Individual targets are set and monitored, which pupils are confident helps them to do better. The skilled teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' progress. Collaborative work is a strength of many lessons. By the end of the school, pupils are very effectively involved in constructively assessing each other's work, promoting their achievement and personal development.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage Unit has been maintained since the previous inspection. The local authority frequently uses the Unit as an example of good practice. As in the main school, careful planning and excellent teamwork from all the adults underpin its success. An exciting and stimulating range of activities are prepared that draw a good balance between adult-directed sessions and those where children make their own choices. The very good organisation of the adults ensures that all groups of children benefit from skilled support. Staff are particularly good at intervening in children's play, to draw out their speaking and listening skills, and develop their understanding. The careful but exciting teaching of phonics (how sounds relate to letters in words) is a particular strength. One session, that combined the best elements of a games lesson with opportunities for reading and writing, helped develop physical skills and phonic understanding, whilst generating immense enjoyment. Children's progress is tracked very carefully, and staff are adept at matching tasks to individuals' needs and interests. As a result, children make very good progress in all areas of learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on the innovative work in English to raise standards in writing to match those in other subjects.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1   |
| 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?   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 1 |

<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>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| 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

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Watlington Primary School, Watlington, OX49 5RB

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I visited your school. You told me that you all enjoyed school, and that there were many good things about it. I agree, and found that your school is outstanding. There are so many good things that I cannot write about all of them, but these are the most important.

- Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Unit.
- Everyone is making excellent progress because teachers are very good at helping you to learn. You do particularly well in mathematics.
- You are growing up into sensible, caring and confident young people, who are a credit to your parents and your school. I was particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and how well you all get along together.
- The adults keep a very careful eye on everyone and make sure that if anyone needs extra help they get it.
- The school gives you exciting opportunities for learning in different subjects, in the special weeks you have, and in the many clubs you can join.
- The adults are all keen to keep on making the school better and better, and they are careful to see what you and your parents think, to help them decide on things.

Even an outstanding school like yours can always improve. I have agreed with the adults that they will carry on helping you improve your standards in writing, until you are just as good as you are in mathematics.

You can help by carrying on working hard, especially with your writing. I hope that you continue to enjoy life at Watlington, and that Year 6 have just as good a time when you start in your secondary schools in September.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector