

West Witney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123084
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314488
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Bradfield-Barnes
Headteacher	Mr Mike Bartleman
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Edington Road Witney OX28 5FZ
Telephone number	01993 706249
Fax number	01993 706251

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

A large community primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years of age. The school serves a diverse social community from Witney and surrounding areas. Children start school on a part-time basis in the Nursery class and move to full-time education in the reception year. In some cohorts, there are considerable variations in the numbers of boys and girls. Almost all pupils are from a White British background and very few speak English as an additional language. A minority of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Most of these have speech and communication problems. The school has achieved the Active Sportsmark and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. In a caring and harmonious environment, relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. As a result, pupils attend regularly, work hard and greatly enjoy all the school has to offer. Parents are very appreciative about their children's good gains in confidence and independence and several spoke of the 'sad occasion when children have to leave.' Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to be responsible in their own learning by making decisions about activities, identifying easy and more difficult tasks to achieve, and developing an understanding about how to improve. Their behaviour is excellent.

Across the school, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2, and many more pupils than nationally attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, good progress is maintained in English and science, but not consistently for all pupils in mathematics. In the latest national tests, some Year 6 of a higher ability did not reach expected targets. However, there are signs of more rapid pupil progress, which the school is working to develop. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning is improving, because of the greater link to practical and relevant experiences. For example, a current topic has led Year 6 to undertake work on nets and coordinates so that they could create the physical features of an island in a three dimensional model.

The quality of teaching is good overall, although there are some inconsistencies. Teaching is mostly good in the Nursery class and Years 1 to 6, and satisfactory in the Reception year. Most lessons are well-structured, so that learning builds successfully on prior attainment. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 shows that their individual work in mathematics is sometimes too easy. In the reception classes, teachers' questioning has insufficient depth, because learning objectives lack clarity. Assessment systems are well-established across the school and teachers are closely involved in monitoring pupils' progress. Additional support is provided at an early stage for those who find learning more difficult in literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants ably support pupils and staff. An outstanding range of enrichment activities extends a good curriculum. The needs of all pupils are addressed well in planning topics, which interest specific groups of pupils. Visits and visitors are considered an essential part of the curriculum and they provide an excellent range of first-hand experiences, which promote pupils' personal and academic development. There is a strong focus on the development of basic skills of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), which extend learning effectively in other subjects. The curriculum for the Reception year is satisfactory, but is not planned in enough detail for the differing needs of the young child.

Leadership and management are good. A dedicated headteacher has identified the right priorities for the school and provided a clear sense of direction through a period of significant improvement. The staff team are supportive and committed to developing the school further, although their leadership roles are at various stages of development. After a period of instability in the governing body, governance is improving, and governors are becoming more involved in strategic planning and review. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is inconsistent. Instability in pupil numbers and staffing is having an adverse effect on the development of this key stage. Currently, the provision is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in the Reception year. After only a few weeks in school, Nursery children are happily settled, because there is a skilled staff team, who are addressing their needs very successfully. Learning is fun and, as a result, children are enthusiastic learners. From average starting points, they are achieving well in a very good range of activities. Progress in their personal development is excellent. Children are learning to take turns and they help each other very well with difficult tasks, such as cutting tissue paper, or pouring milk into a beaker. In the Reception year, personal development is good and children reach standards beyond expected goals for their age in this area of learning. In other areas of learning progress is satisfactory, because teacher expectations are not high enough. For example, in talking with children, teachers often accept a first answer, and opportunities are missed to extend the learning by questioning. Although there is a satisfactory curriculum, there are insufficient opportunities for learning in more depth in most areas of learning both indoors and out. Some resources are also limited, particularly for role-play. As a result, not all Reception children are making the progress of which they are capable.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by improving the quality of teaching in order to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly for the more able.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in the Reception year so that children are challenged more effectively in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection because the quality of teaching has improved. Each year there is some variation in national test results, because of differences in the size of cohorts, and in the numbers of pupils who find learning more difficult. Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected of three and four-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are consistently above average, and remain so to Year 6, because the teaching is consistently good. In Years 3 to 6, the better use of assessment information has enabled pupils to learn at a more rapid rate. However, test results in mathematics show that some Year 6 of higher ability do not reach standards of which they are capable. There are signs that recent initiatives to accelerate rates of progress are proving effective and the current Year 6 are predicted to reach more challenging targets. Pupils with difficulties in communication, language and numeracy are making good progress because they receive consistently good support in lessons. Standards in ICT are good and pupils used their skills well in other subjects. The standard of pupil presentation in their work is high.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel that they have 'a good school that's very friendly'. Pupils have a good understanding of how to look after themselves and show responsible attitudes towards others. Relationships are excellent between pupils and with adults. Pupils say that staff deal with any instances of bullying promptly and appropriately. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils is good. Strong skills of teamwork and leadership are developed well on residential visits. Enterprise skills are good. Pupils organise lunchtime clubs, have built a miniature school garden and designed a float for the local carnival. The school council has a strong voice in school, and carry out their role with maturity. Most pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They participate in a good range of sporting activities, which are very popular. Pupils have high aspirations for their future. They see themselves in careers, ranging from scientists to show jumpers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic learners because the teaching is good. Coupled with the good teaching, pupils' good attitudes to learning and excellent relationships with adults are key features of the good progress they make. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and this enables pupils to work in an orderly learning environment. Teachers share learning objectives very well and most pupils have a good understanding of what they are expected to learn. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their own learning and share ideas about how to improve. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 6, a pupil's writing was used as a teaching tool to model the important features of a good piece of persuasive writing. Pupils showed excellent skills of discussion as they identified the key features of an outstanding news report. ICT is often used as a learning tool to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding further. Assessment and marking have improved since the previous inspection, and are mostly good in helping pupils to improve. However, in some lessons in mathematics there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. At these times, the pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The breadth of the curriculum is good. The needs of all pupils are given good consideration. Literacy, science and ICT are planned well, and pupils have good opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. The curriculum for mathematics reflects national guidelines, although there are fewer links across the curriculum. An outstanding range of educational visits from Years 1 to 6 is developing pupils' personal qualities. Out of school activities are extensive and very popular with pupils, particularly in sports. Currently, the school is involved in extending its curriculum to deepen pupils' understanding of the wider world and motivate them to learn. A current topic on 'Islands' has proved successful in engaging pupils in challenging debates about citizenship and responsibilities of energy conservation. There is good additional support for pupils who find learning in literacy and numeracy more difficult. Individual programmes are well-planned to meet the needs of individuals.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils well and ensure that they are educated in a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Robust arrangements are in place for child protection, risk assessment, and health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out rigorously. Across the school, there are well-established systems to track pupils' progress and identify strengths and weaknesses in provision. Teachers introduce improvement targets at the start of lessons from which pupils assess their own progress. Pupils are now involved in assessing their own learning and this is increasing their rates of progress. Achievements are regularly shared in lessons, and progress is celebrated across the school community. The school has developed good relationships with external agencies, who give appropriate support as necessary. Vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult are helped to achieve. There are good arrangements for pupils' transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided the school with a clear sense of direction, during a period of considerable change in senior managers and the governing body. Under his guidance, the school is a happy and friendly place in which pupils achieve well. A committed leadership team are now in place and are monitoring the school's performance robustly. With good procedures of self-evaluation the school has identified that the standards of more able pupils can be improved. As a result, changes have been introduced in the curriculum and there are early signs of a greater challenge for pupils in their learning. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Led by a perceptive chairperson, governors are gaining in understanding of their roles and have a greater involvement in improvement planning. School finances are managed efficiently. The school is aware of the need for greater stability and better resourcing of provision in the Reception year.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

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?	2
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	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

18 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of West Witney Primary School, Witney, OX28 5FZ

You may recall that a team of three inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and finding out about all the exciting things that you are doing. We were pleased that we visited during your special week, and saw some of your work in the exciting 'Island' topic. We think that you have a good school. The things we liked most about your school are:

- you achieve good standards by Years 2 and 6
- your behaviour is excellent and you care for each other well
- you are enthusiastic learners and participate very well in all school activities
- the teachers provide many exciting things for you to do
- there are many residential visits when you can work and play together in a different environment
- the school council are effective in influencing the work of the school
- adults care and support you well
- your headteacher, staff and governors are good at judging if the school is doing well.

We know that all the adults are working hard to make your school even better. We have asked them to do two things to make your school better. We think that you could learn more rapidly in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, particularly those pupils who find work easy. We have asked the teachers in the Reception year to provide a greater range of exciting things for children to do. We are sure that your school will continue to improve.

We hope that you carry on enjoying school and learning many interesting things. We are sure that your school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely,

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector