

Wellsprings Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123710
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314683
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hancock

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	
School	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Spight
Headteacher	Mark Lunn
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
School address	Crowcombe Road Taunton TA2 7NF
Telephone number	01823 275556
Fax number	01823 325753

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Inspection number	314683

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and has an attached nursery. It serves its local community in north Taunton. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small percentage from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities is below the national average. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2007. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wellsprings Primary School is a satisfactory school. It is a central part of the community it serves and is highly valued by parents. This is illustrated by comments such as 'Wellsprings is a happy and welcoming school and our daughter felt at home in a very short time. She has thoroughly enjoyed her time at this school.' Strengths in moral and social development and strong relationships contribute much to pupils' personal development and well-being. The outcomes are seen in friendly pupils who behave well, feel safe and get on well together. They are keen to participate in exercise and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The good enrichment opportunities are a strong feature in the curriculum and stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning.

Academic achievement is satisfactory overall. Children enter school with levels of skills that are well below those expected for children of a similar age. They settle quickly and make good progress in the Foundation Stage, taking full advantage of the opportunities offered to them, particularly in the outdoor area. By the end of Year 6 standards are below average in mathematics and science and well below in English. As a result of new initiatives introduced by the school, standards and achievement are now improving in English. However, the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is ineffective. Their individual education plans are inadequate because they are not always well matched to pupils' particular needs. As a consequence, pupils do not always achieve as well as they should and their progress is inadequate.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is sometimes good where pupils make good progress. However, assessment information is not used consistently well when planning work. Consequently, lesson activities do not always support or challenge pupils of different abilities to do their best. The hard work and commitment of the headteacher is a strong feature in the school's leadership and management. The role of subject leaders in English and mathematics has successfully been strengthened so that they are actively involved in self-assessment and school improvement. With the improved involvement of subject leaders and governors and the continued success of recent actions, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity for further development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school with standards well below those expected for their age, with particularly poorly developed language and mathematical skills. They achieve well in the Foundation Unit where children from the Nursery and Reception classes mix well together. Many reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 but their communication, language and literacy skills remain below average. Children settle quickly and are safe and well looked after in this spacious caring environment. Good teaching and interesting and stimulating activities focus on developing skills and building up children's self-confidence. They clearly enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage and work and play well together. The curriculum is planned well and good use is made of the excellent outdoor facilities, which provide a wonderful range of imaginative activities to enrich learning. Although the Foundation Stage leader has left the school recently, effective teamwork ensures that all staff are clear about what they have to do to help each child succeed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English.
- Ensure that teaching makes full use of assessment information so that all groups of pupils, particularly less able and higher attainers, achieve as well as they can.
- Improve the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in order to effectively support their learning.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were below average overall, but were significantly higher in mathematics and science than in English, where there was evidence of underachievement for many pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inspection findings indicate that the school's actions to improve provision in English, such as a high focus on developing phonics, improving reading structures and early intervention when problems are identified are having a positive impact on raising pupils' achievements. As a result, although standards remain below average in mathematics and science and well below in English at the end of Year 6, they are improving and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in each subject. Small group activities, often led by teaching assistants, help many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with their classroom activities. However, their individual education plans are not always specific to individual needs or reviewed regularly. As a consequence, some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not achieve as well as they could and their progress is unsatisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Behaviour is good and pupils of all ages are friendly and courteous and get along well with each other. They enjoy the wide range of activities on offer to them and they especially like the spacious school grounds because they 'can play rounders in the summer and football in the winter'. They see adults as friendly and kind and relationships across the school are good. Pupils have a developing moral conscience and speak sensitively about collections they make for charitable causes, but their knowledge and understanding of other cultures, faiths and religions are less well developed. Pupils say that assemblies can be overlong and prefer it when they themselves take a more active role. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They make a satisfactory but improving contribution to their own school community and older pupils are enjoying new arrangements to help supervise and play with younger ones during break. They speak positively about when they sold ice sticks to make some money for extra playground resources last summer but one girl said, 'We may not do it again because they contained too much sugar!' Attendance is satisfactory. Overall strengths in social and moral development are evident and by the time pupils leave school, they are confident in these areas. Progress in developing the key skills they will need in later life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is sometimes good where time is used effectively and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Positive relationships result in pupils knowing that they can ask for help if they get stuck. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. The purpose of the lesson is explained so that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. Good use is often made of interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning. The key weakness in teaching is that lessons do not consistently meet the needs of all pupils, particularly lower attaining and higher attaining pupils. Teaching is not always well matched to what pupils already know and understand. This hinders the progress of different groups of pupils at different times; they either coast or get left behind. Although there is evidence of good marking, it is not used consistently well enough across the school to help pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is broad and includes the teaching of French. There is a strong commitment to sport and artwork is of a high standard. Learning is extended well through a good range of extra-curricular activities including residential experiences, a wide range of clubs and numerous visits. These have a positive effect on pupils' interest in school and strengthen links with the local community. Curricular planning is satisfactory and the school is currently reviewing the curriculum to provide a more creative approach to learning. Recent improvements to the provision of literacy, such as a more focused approach to teaching phonics, are having a positive impact on raising attainment, but English has rightly been identified as a key area for future development. The school is aware that the provision for religious education and pupils' spiritual and cultural development has a lower profile than it should. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, which helps ensure pupils work hard in most lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of pastoral care is satisfactory with some good features evident in the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know their pupils well and are committed to encouraging their enjoyment and healthy development. Recent review of a number of policies and procedures, which guide standards of care and well-being, are being implemented across the school. Systems to ensure safe recruitment of staff are up to date. The school is now working more closely with outside agencies to promote good attendance but the impact of this work is hindered because some families are not supporting the school in its efforts to raise attendance and punctuality.

Academic support of pupils has improved significantly during the last year. New assessment systems have ensured that there is accurate information about pupils' attainment from the time they enter school. However, assessment information is not used consistently. As a result, work is not always matched well enough to individual needs to enable them to do their best.

The identification and assessment of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate and this slows their rate of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The significant changes in the leadership over the last few years have now settled down to enable the school to get a firmer grip on improvement. The strong leadership of the new headteacher drives the work of the school and he is highly valued by the majority of parents. He has worked hard since his appointment and has high expectations to improve standards and achievement. He receives sound support from the two assistant headteachers and they have begun to reconsider the school's self-evaluation procedures to identify key areas for development. New subject leaders have been appointed for English and mathematics and they have been empowered to take an active monitoring role, so that they have a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. This is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards and achievement. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the leadership and management of the provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is currently ineffective. As a result, not all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as they should and their progress is inadequate. Assessment procedures, including new systems for tracking pupils' progress, have significantly improved to identify those not making sufficient progress. Targets are set that give a satisfactory level of challenge, and these are usually met. Governors are hard-working and are very supportive of the school. They have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in monitoring the school's progress by attending regular training.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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?	3
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	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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

Dear Children

Inspection of Wellsprings Primary School, Taunton TA2 7NF

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking to you very much and thought you were friendly and polite.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education and these are some things we thought were good.

- You enjoy school and behave well.
- You have good understanding of how important it is to eat healthy food and keep fit by regular exercise.
- You like the clubs you attend and visits and visitors to school.
- Teachers and adults look after you well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school better.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it better.

- We have asked teachers to improve your work in English.
- We have also asked them to plan your work carefully so that it is not too hard or too easy, to help you learn more quickly.
- Make sure senior teachers responsible for children who need extra help are more involved in providing suitable work and checking carefully how well these children are doing.

You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and listening to your teachers.

Best wishes for the future.

Ian Hancock

Lead inspector