

Wenhaston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124616
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	314985
Inspection date	5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Allen
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Brinkley
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Hall Road Wenhaston Halesworth Suffolk IP19 9EP
Telephone number	01502 478328
Fax number	01502 478982

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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 the school achieves its high standards, and the current picture of achievement, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, relative to pupils' attainment on entry.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils and why the school feels its care is outstanding.
- The role of subject leaders in raising standards.

The inspector gathered evidence from observations of lessons, samples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of the governors, and from parents' questionnaires. The main documents used by the school in monitoring and strategic planning were examined. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. It serves the village of Wenhaston and surrounding area. A significant proportion of the parents choose to send their children to the school from outside the school's catchment area. The majority of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, and is especially high in some year groups. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely from year to year, but taken over time a significant proportion have skills and knowledge below the levels expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school provides pupils with an effective education and an outstanding level of care and personal development, resulting from strong leadership by the headteacher over a number of years and close teamwork among the staff. Pupils are extremely happy at the school as shown by the way that they participate in the excellent range of activities available. Parents are also extremely happy with the school. One said 'We feel the education is excellent and we have always been delighted with our children's progress.'

Pupils achieve well. They make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics, and by the end of Year 4 standards are above average. In 2007, standards in Year 2 fell over the previous year, but this was due to the nature of the year group and the high proportion of pupils, particularly boys, who found learning difficult. Results show that the school provides well for such pupils who achieve better standards than is typical for similar pupils nationally. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 4 are on track to achieve standards that are likely to be above average. Standards in speaking and listening are not as good, reflecting missed opportunities to provide a sufficiently wide range of activities to help pupils develop these skills. Standards in the arts and sport are above those typically found. These subjects have a high profile throughout the school, as reflected in awards the school has gained.

One reason for this good achievement is the good teaching and learning. Staff build very effective relationships with their pupils which encourage all children to take a full and active part in lessons. As one parent said about a child who joined the school late, 'It was like someone had switched the light on!' This accurately reflects the positive attitudes of the pupils as they respond to well planned and interesting lessons. Teachers know the children well as individuals. Detailed tracking and assessment systems help the school to identify any underachievement quickly. Teachers are very well supported by good quality learning support assistants, and their work has a positive impact on achievement. Where the teaching is less strong, the marking of pupils' work does not consistently help them understand how they can improve, and the setting of targets for groups or individuals offers insufficient challenge to support learning. Good use is made of specialist teaching in areas such as French, music and physical education.

The teachers plan an effective curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements and is appropriate for the needs of mixed-age classes. Good links between subjects help pupils to see how they can use skills gained in one area to help their learning in another. For example, good links between information and communication technology (ICT), history and music provided the basis for some effective work on the Vikings. The school provides an outstanding range of clubs, visits and other enrichment activities, and a high proportion of pupils make the most of these opportunities.

The level of care, guidance and support is excellent. One pupil said that the staff are 'like my mum.' A particular strength is the way the school identifies groups with a specific need and investigates imaginative and effective ways to support them. For example, a quiet group of pupils had their self-esteem and confidence boosted by some horse-riding sessions. A much livelier group who found concentrating difficult have responded very effectively to a system of challenges and rewards involving sports activities. In addition, the school provides outstanding pastoral care, keeping pupils safe and ensuring all requirements regarding checks on adults, risk assessments, first aid and child protection are met.

The outcomes of the excellent levels of care are outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In particular, the pupils develop an excellent appreciation of nature and an awareness of other cultures. The school encourages full attendance although this remains satisfactory and no better, due largely to holidays being taken in term time.. A major strength is the way pupils contribute to their own and the wider community. They take a leading role in road safety and environmental activities, and participate in the school council, raising money for the school and for a range of charities. They take their responsibilities very seriously which, together with their good basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, is helping prepare them well for life after school. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say there is no bullying in the school. They are confident in the adults and that they have someone to talk to if they are concerned or worried. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

The strengths of the school are the result of the clear educational direction provided by the headteacher and the way the school makes such effective use of all available staff, helping to ensure good value for money as well as keeping teaching groups small. Subject leaders provide good support and guidance for colleagues, but the overview of target-setting lacks consistency. The target setting processes are not sufficiently challenging to be fully effective in raising standards. Teachers continue to develop professionally through a range of training activities that are shared effectively and put into practice at the school. A major strength is in the outstanding and wide-ranging partnerships created with others to help provide an effective education for all pupils. The governing body support and challenge the school well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and any areas for development. The school's self evaluation is accurate and honest. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for the children in the Reception group is good because it is well planned with good links to pupils' work in Key Stage 1. The children benefit from some high quality support from teachers and especially from the teaching assistant. The planning ensures the full coverage of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children have a good mix of adult-led and self-chosen activities. Effective links are made between activities. For example, when children had finished writing a list of what they would take to the moon, they were encouraged to use their construction play to build a spacecraft. Their progress is effectively assessed and tracked, and they progress well, especially in their personal and social skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- Review target-setting processes to ensure that all targets set are sufficiently challenging.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	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	3
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	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?	1

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	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	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	2
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

6 February 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Wenhaston Primary School, Wenhaston, Suffolk IP19 9EP

I am writing to thank you very much for the way you made me welcome when I visited your school recently. I am also writing to tell you what I discovered on my visit.

I think you are lucky to attend such a good school. Mrs Brinkley, the teachers and other adults are all working very hard to help you learn new things that will make it easier for you to do well at the middle school. The school is especially good at providing you with an excellent level of care and support. This means that as well as looking after you well, they also closely check how well you are doing so they can help you when you find something difficult.

You told me how much you enjoy school. I know you enjoy the responsibilities you are given, such as recycling and road safety. I was also very impressed with how much you enjoy your lessons and how well you take part, answering questions and working very well together. The teachers are helped to teach you well because you behave so well!

You learn a lot and reach high standards before you leave the school. This is due to the good teaching you get from all the adults, and the enthusiastic way you take part in other activities such as clubs and visits. To help the school get even better in the future I have asked your teachers to do two things:

- give you more opportunities to talk and listen, including through drama and role play activities, and
- make sure the targets they set, both for test results and for your own personal use, are challenging enough to really help you learn as well as I think you can.

Thank you again for your help on my visit. I enjoyed meeting those of you I had time to talk to and those I met at lunch. Enjoy your time at Wenhaston and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely,

Geof Timms

Lead inspector