

Wavendon Gate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131397
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	315799
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kathy Kirby
Headteacher	Ms Lyn-Marie Hollinshead
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Gregories Drive Wavendon Gate Milton Keynes MK7 7HL
Telephone number	01908 586394
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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: whether the current Year 6 pupils are achieving well, how much progress pupils make in lessons and the impact leadership and management are having on pupils' achievement. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and around the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils, and an analysis of 130 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves an area of mixed housing in the south-east of Milton Keynes. The social circumstances of most pupils are similar to those typically found nationally. About three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage and others come from 15 different minority ethnic backgrounds. At present, there is a below average proportion of pupils in the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in People, National Healthy Schools, Sports ActiveMark Gold, ArtsMark Gold. In addition, the school was awarded the Buckinghamshire Sport School of the Year in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wavendon Gate provides its pupils with a good standard of education and it is on an upward trend. Children enter the Reception classes with skills in line with those expected of four-year-olds and they make good progress. This is maintained in all year groups and marks good achievement overall. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are well above those expected for their age. This enables them to be prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Parents are rightly supportive of the school. They are almost unanimous in stating that their children enjoy school and are safe and well cared for. These views were summarised by the parent who wrote, 'The school is like a family. My child looks forward to going to school each day'. Because the level of care and support is good and all the adults make sure there is a positive atmosphere, pupils make good progress in their personal development. They are proud of their school, have positive attitudes and benefit from the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils. A few parents suggested that behaviour in the school is not good because supervision levels are not adequate. This was investigated and it was found that pupils are carefully overseen and levels of supervision parallel those in most other schools. Behaviour is generally good and this is the view of pupils too. Pupils that have particular behavioural needs are supported well and, as a result, they rarely affect the learning or well-being of others. Pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe was demonstrated by a pupil who said, 'We look out for danger and make sure that we stay away from it!' They also have a good regard for healthy lifestyles, as one explained, 'We love playing sports and we have lots of chances to do different things. These help us to stay fit'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking responsibility by, for example, being members of the school council, raising money through cake sales for charities, and being play leaders.

Pupils enjoy school and learning which is reflected in their above average attendance. They relish learning because the quality of teaching is consistently good and, on occasion, outstanding. 'Teachers are fun to have in the classrooms because they make lessons exciting', suggested one pupil. Teaching is good because pupils are managed well, classrooms are calm and quietly industrious, and staff prepare good quality activities that are pitched at the right level to provide good challenge for pupils of all abilities. These are the main reasons why pupils achieve well. Teachers generally share learning objectives with pupils and make clear what they have to do to succeed. In the best lessons, they refer back to these success criteria and this enables pupils to check for themselves how well they are doing. The school recognises that these strategies are not always consistently applied.

The exceptionally wide range of activities available after school make a strong contribution to the school's provision, particularly in the areas of music and sport. The curriculum is excellent. It is highly successful in linking subjects together giving meaning to learning. It engages the interest of pupils and is very successful in providing for pupils' personal development. The inspection occurred during 'Book Week', and pupils thoroughly enjoyed meeting and listening to a professional author and illustrator. A good example of how the school makes learning exciting and interesting was demonstrated by the recent Year 6 theme on the Houses of Parliament. Pupils studied formal writing, had a debate on fireworks and wrote leaflets in literacy lessons, prepared presentations using computers, did sketching in art lessons and, in citizenship lessons, learned about democracy by holding elections. The work culminated in a visit to the Houses of Parliament. Provision for pupils that have learning difficulties or disabilities,

or are learning English as an additional language, is given good priority because these pupils' needs are identified early and an excellent range of programmes have been developed to enable them to make good progress.

Very close attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are safeguarded well and their health and safety is secured. In recognition of the need to provide additional support for some pupils, the school has appointed two learning mentors and even though they have only been in post for a short time, their positive impact is already evident in the attitudes and learning of the pupils they support. The recently re-organised arrangements for tracking pupils' progress enables teachers to set challenging targets and to keep a close watch on their development. Most pupils have a clear view of their own targets, especially in literacy. Junior pupils in particular have a thorough understanding of what they are expected to achieve by the end of each year.

The quality of leadership and management is good and there are some excellent features. The new headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. She has built successfully on the vision and leadership of her predecessor. She has a deep commitment to improving the school's effectiveness and this is shared by staff. The school has a newly established senior leadership team and also has many staff who have recently taken new responsibilities. They already provide good leadership. The headteacher has brought considerable rigour and structure to the school's systems for checking provision and progress. This has resulted in good quality self-evaluation and excellent improvement planning. Most of all it has had a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. In addition, the headteacher has strengthened teamwork and given additional and appropriate responsibilities to staff. All these positive features demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement. Governors provide good support and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and they too are committed to ensuring that its effectiveness is improved. To this end, they are rightly focusing on developing their strategic role further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and well in the Foundation Stage because the provision is good, and the excellent induction procedures enable them to quickly become confident and to feel safe. This in turn helps them to develop very positive dispositions towards learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good and staff have made very good amendments to their planning to ensure that it meets all the requirements of the curriculum for this age group. As a result, the curriculum is now excellent. There is a very good balance between activities promoted by adults and those that the children choose. Positive and effective outdoor learning is promoted well because staff provide a good range of activities that extend and interest the children. 'My son thoroughly enjoys school and activities such as the spring walks and shopping trips have enthused him and added a real dimension to his learning.' These comments reflect the many positive views expressed by parents of children that have just started school and express well the good achievement of pupils in all areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make teachers' reference to success criteria in lessons more consistent.
- Ensure that all pupils across the school are clear about the targets set for them.

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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wavendon Gate School, Milton Keynes, MK7 7HL

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited you recently. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn and play. I was pleased to hear that you thoroughly enjoy school and learning.

Your school is good and getting better. You told me that you feel really safe in school and I can see that this is because the staff take good care of you. The adults work hard for you and the teaching is good. Your behaviour is good and you take care to make sure that all pupils enjoy school as much as you do. Your teachers make the subjects you study very exciting by linking them together and you take part in a impressive range of activities after school. I was impressed with your levels of concentration and your good learning in lessons. As a result you achieve well and reach well above average standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Your progress overall is good.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that your learning is really good in all lessons and also that they make it clear to all of you about your learning targets.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector