

Wormley Church of England Primary School (VC)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117400
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326600
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	358
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Trew
Headteacher	Mrs S Peet
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cozens Lane East Wormley EN10 6QA
Telephone number	01992 303331
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wormley Primary is larger than most other schools of its type. It maintains close links with local churches. It has its own Nursery and Reception classes that currently have 93 three to five year olds in the Early Years Foundation Stage Standards on entry to the Nursery classes are below average, particularly in social and language development. The school's characteristics are changing, with more pupils than previously joining with learning and social difficulties. Most pupils come from White British families. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, but increasing. Only a few speak English as an additional language but, of these, many are at an early stage of learning English. A small number of pupils come from a travelling heritage. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is about average. A high proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school between Years 3 and 6. The school has recently been subject to reorganisation. This entailed relocation to its present refurbished and extended building on the site of another school that closed. Pupils from this school also attend. The school provides a room for local extended schools provision and has its own breakfast club, as well as running a number of classes for parents.

It has not been possible to appoint a substantive headteacher since the retirement of the previous post holder in 2006. Since then, an acting headteacher has led the school.

The school is accredited under the Healthy Schools and ActiveMark schemes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wormley Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving education and achieves satisfactory value for money. Some good aspects are evident. For example, effective pastoral care contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Strengths are also evident in systems to set targets and track pupils' progress towards them. Good links have been established with secondary schools and recently introduced home visits mean that families are well served when their children first enter school or transfer at the end of Year 6.

Good leadership and management have succeeded in not letting standards slip during the reorganisation of local schools. Senior staff have been very successful in relocating the school to refurbished buildings on the site of another, which was closed during the same reorganisation. They have built a strong climate for learning, fully uniting pupils from both schools. Hence all pupils feel safe, valued and fully involved in the new setting. A Year 6 pupil, typical of the vast majority, summed it up by saying 'We think it's much better and we've got good learning strategies now'. Some fluctuations in results have occurred in recent years. However, standards in Year 6 are improving and results in national tests in 2008 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science, when previously they had been below average. Pupils currently in Year 6 are maintaining this improvement. In Year 2, assessments indicate that standards are usually below average, representing satisfactory achievement. However, the school's records indicate that progress is speeding up, because good subject management is sustaining rising trends throughout the school. These improvements suggest that the capacity to improve is good.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and know much about eating healthily and keeping fit. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although opportunities for pupils to experience at firsthand the rich cultural diversity of the United Kingdom are limited. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the school's monitoring indicates that the proportion of good teaching is increasing. The curriculum is also satisfactory. Recognising shortcomings, senior leaders have taken steps to ensure that stronger links are made between subjects so that pupils will be able to practise and apply the skills they have gained in a wider range of contexts than is currently the case. They are also acting on their observations that marking does not consistently give pupils clear guidance on how to make faster progress. This also leads to teachers not adapting their lessons sufficiently on the basis of the information they gain from marking work. These linked shortcomings have slowed learning, but the action being taken is correcting the pattern.

The acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher, supported by the governors and staff, have evaluated the school's work effectively. They have successfully established the new systems required to open the enlarged building. Morale is high and new staff teams have been put together to take responsibility for improvements in each subject area. Management of provision and support for various groups of pupils, including those of different backgrounds and abilities, ensures good equality of opportunity and successfully tackles barriers to learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Effectiveness in the Early Years Foundation Stage echoes that in the main school. Good leadership and management have ensured that resources and organisation in the new setting

are strong. Children are receiving a satisfactory and improving start to their learning as teaching improves. Pastoral care is already good. Arrangements to ensure the daily health and safety of children are very thorough. Children are supported effectively, so they settle into school quickly each day. Those in the Nursery and Reception classes have ample access to indoor and outdoor areas that promote the acquisition of skills in all six areas of learning. Good leadership has correctly identified that the balance between child initiated work and play, and what adults decide children should do, tends too much towards the latter. Nevertheless, children work confidently and happily, learning to co-operate with adults and each other. They are enthusiastic in their new surroundings and enjoy being at school. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are close to normally expected goals, although few exceed them. Considering their starting points, this represents satisfactory progress and achievement. As in the main school, tracking indicates that good management is improving this picture rapidly, with an increasing proportion of children making faster progress than before.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to practise and apply their literacy, mathematics and other key skills in a wide range of contexts, thereby further raising performance, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that marking informs pupils consistently about what to do next to raise the standard of their work.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to understand and experience the rich cultural diversity of modern Britain.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the past few years, standards in national tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated. In Year 2, results are usually below average. However, standards fell significantly in reading, writing and mathematics in 2007. They then rose again in 2008 to the levels of 2006. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, as most pupils make normally expected progress, often from below average starting points. In Year 6, results are usually a little below average in English, mathematics and science, although fluctuations between subjects are apparent. Nevertheless, taking all subjects together, results are improving, indicating satisfactory achievement across Years 3 to 6, despite some pupil mobility in these age groups. In the 2008 tests, broadly average levels were reached, with a strong performance in mathematics, in which the proportion who reached above normally expected levels exceeded the national figure. Significant differences in the progress of different groups are not evident. Pupils who struggle with their learning for identified reasons receive the necessary support to make similar progress to others, as do more able pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Positive relationships between pupils and staff foster good personal development and help ensure that pupils enjoy school. Pupils are confident and relate well to each other. They know about how to adopt healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves

safe. Older pupils enjoy acting as play leaders. They help younger ones and demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong. Behaviour is good because it is well managed. Regular opportunities to work together, along with satisfactory development of basic skills in literacy and mathematics, provide a sound preparation for future workplace skills. Pupils contribute satisfactorily towards helping the school run smoothly, carrying out a number of jobs, and the school council ensures that pupils' views are heard. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils celebrate other faiths and customs as well as their own and visit places of worship. Their support of a number of charities increases their sense of responsibility for those less well off than themselves. Good opportunities exist for reflection during assemblies and some lessons. The school has begun to make contact with others in Europe and the wider world, but pupils are not sufficiently aware of the richness of cultural diversity in modern Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Effective professional development is beginning to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. However, because they are at an early stage, the full impact of these improvements is not being felt. Nevertheless, the match of methods and activities in lessons to the needs of individuals and groups is increasingly good and this is enabling pupils of all abilities to make more rapid progress. Staff teamwork is strongly evident. More experienced teachers support newer colleagues, but are also willing to learn from the new ideas and methods that they bring. In many lessons, the pace of learning is good, but this is not consistently so. Teachers now share with pupils the focus of lessons and their expectations of what should be achieved. This helps pupils to focus on the main points of what they should learn. Teaching assistants and teachers work closely together, which provides pupils with consistent messages about behaviour and expectations. Additionally it enables all groups to make progress at similar rates. Pupils are given guidance on how well they are doing and on how they can improve their work, but the marking of their written work does not yet consistently indicate areas for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum places a high priority on developing pupils' literacy and mathematics skills, together with a strong focus on their personal and social education. Subject teams are currently introducing many improvements to the way that the curriculum is taught but, as with teaching and learning, improvements are at too early a stage for their impact to be evaluated. These improvements include emphasising links between subjects and enabling pupils to apply skills acquired in one subject to other contexts. The curriculum is modified so that those pupils who find learning difficult are able to follow the main themes of the work being undertaken. This helps them to make similar progress to their peers. Activities led by secondary school teachers provide interesting challenges for the highest attaining pupils. Several visits, visitors and special events enhance the curriculum. These capture pupils' interest and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils value the good range of clubs, some of which contribute to their strong awareness of healthy life styles. Playing a range of musical instruments and singing in the school choir build up confidence and self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength within the school. All systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare meet requirements. Adults know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Early identification of individual learning needs and a range of additional, focused sessions help pupils fill gaps in their learning of basic skills. There is good support for those who are vulnerable or who find learning difficult. This support, coupled with the effective use of additional help from external agencies, ensures that these pupils progress at similar rates to others. Pupils' progress is effectively tracked and pupils themselves are becoming more involved in this process through regular meetings with their teachers. However, pupils are not regularly involved in assessing their own performance for them to take responsibility for improving it. Targets are set and pupils are increasingly aware of them. These are helping pupils to improve their work in English and mathematics and hence reach expected levels.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers at all levels have done well to ensure that effective monitoring of performance have continued alongside all the other work that has gone into relocating the school. This monitoring has highlighted areas of weakness and has enabled senior leaders to draw up and implement plans for improvement. Senior leaders and governors have successfully recruited and retained staff during the period of uncertainty created by the reorganisation of local schools. They have developed effective procedures for inducting new staff, based on strong mentoring and in-service training. Their success is apparent in the improving quality of pupils' learning and achievements. Senior staff have also achieved much in winning the support of the local community for the new arrangements, even though many were initially unconvinced of its value. Some residual disquiet is still apparent amongst parents, as seen in responses in a few questionnaires. However, the support of the large majority is secure and the building of wider community cohesion is now planned. The following parents' comments are representative of a large majority. One said, 'The teachers and head have done brilliantly to ensure the transfer. The intake of the other pupils was done with such little upset,' whilst another simply stated, 'My child thinks it's better and that's lovely'.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Wormley Church of England Primary School (VC), Wormley, EN10 6LH

Thank you for being so helpful when Mrs Bavin, Mrs Perry and I inspected your school during those two exciting snowy days. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent with you and talking to your school councillors. We spoke to some of you who had attended Ley Park and others from the old Wormley school. Nearly all of those we spoke to told us that you enjoy being at your school and that it is good. We can understand why you think it is good. Your teachers look after you well and they are introducing many new things to help you to improve your work. However, we agree with your headteacher that this is not yet having a full impact on standards. For this reason, we are saying that the quality of education is satisfactory and that your work is satisfactory. We completely agree that things are improving well, because leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job and some things are already good.

Here are some of the things that are good:

- you behave well and concentrate in lessons
- the new targets and ways of checking how you are getting on are good
- your teachers work well with other organisations to improve what you learn
- your learning and progress are speeding up and are often good now
- everyone works together, as a team, to develop and improve what they provide for you.

Here are three things that we have asked your governors, senior leaders and teachers to do:

- Give you greater opportunities to practise and apply the skills you learn in one subject when you are working in others
- Use marking better to give you information about how to make faster progress
- Increase opportunities for you to experience our own country's cultural diversity.

I hope that you will continue to behave as well as you do now, as this helps your teachers to improve your learning.

John W. Paull

Lead inspector