

The Wroxham School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117566
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326651
Inspection date	9 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	242
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	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Toye
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wroxham Gardens Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 3DJ
Telephone number	01707643576
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the quality of provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- pupils' current attainment and progress;
- the impact of the school's work on improving writing;
- the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- the provision for the breakfast and after-school clubs;

gathering evidence from: the school's self evaluation, lesson observations, school documentation, discussions with the senior leadership team, governors and pupils and the analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is average in size. It is popular and heavily over subscribed. The majority of pupils are White British although there are pupils from a wide range of ethnic heritage. English is an additional language for a few pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils with statements detailing their educational needs. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Fewer pupils join or leave the school throughout the school year than is generally seen. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a nursery, which operates a flexible provision. Attainment on entry to the nursery draws on a full range of abilities but overall is generally typical for this age of children. The school has gained national and international recognition for aspects of its work. It has gained awards for Investors in People and Financial Management in schools. It has also been awarded Healthy School status.

The school provides a breakfast and after school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school has continued to make significant further improvements since the last inspection when it was judged outstanding. This high performing school has an excellent reputation locally. This is reflected in the overwhelming support of the many parents who took the trouble to write and return the inspection questionnaires. Comments such as, 'An excellent school and an amazing learning environment,' and 'Our son has made excellent progress without any feeling of pressure,' accurately reflect the school's strengths and provide the headlines for this report.

Pupils make excellent progress academically and in their personal development. Periodic and detailed assessment, moderated amongst staff, ensures that assessment information is accurate. The school uses this information to monitor the progress of all pupils very carefully providing additional support for those whose progress shows signs of slipping. The result is that pupils attain consistently high standards. Almost all pupils reach the expected levels by the end of Year 6 and approximately half reach the higher levels (Level 5). Standards in mathematics are generally exceptionally high. Current standards in Year 6 are high, in not only English, mathematics, and science but in information and communication technology and other subjects. The school is reviewing the teaching of writing by looking closely at particular approaches for spelling, building on the phonics work lower down the school, and handwriting. This has improved pupils' accuracy in spelling and interest in vocabulary. Standards in English over the last three years have been significantly above average. The school is also working to raise the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in science. Midway through the school year, the school's tracking systems indicate that almost all pupils across the year groups are on track for good progress and roughly, half in each group have already made excellent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties make excellent progress because of, as one parent with a child with difficulties put it, 'all staff show such great understanding, empathy and patience.'

Teachers are highly skilled practitioners. They, along with the highly effective learning support assistants and other adults, work together extremely well to promote excellent learning. They tap into and foster pupils' motivation very effectively, providing wide ranging opportunities for them to take the initiative and undertake purposeful tasks. The school is highly effective in developing pupils' capacity as successful independent learners. Pupils enjoy the use of the various 'thinking hats' approach to problem solving and find them helpful. Teachers fully engage pupils' as partners in learning and pupils learn effectively because they are eager to improve. Pupils are fully involved in the assessment of their work, contributing to their progress meeting with staff, parents and headteacher. The high proportion of adults in classrooms give very focused support to the pupils. Parents commented that staff are approachable, dedicated and motivated to provide the best for the children. They also stressed that the school sought to involve families. Lessons are planned very carefully, often with creative flair and with implicit varying degrees of challenge. Because meaningful links are developed between subjects, there is often planned overlap so that exploration in one subject leads to reinforcement in another. Staff provide the pupils with structured support to ensure that they have the necessary skills to complete the task and tackle the challenges. This is a particularly strong feature of lesson planning. Standards in reading are high and pupils enjoy reading. However, the way books are displayed in the library and insufficient signposting or promotion makes it difficult for pupils find their way around the stock and choose books.

The school fosters pupils' confidence and self-belief extremely effectively. Pupils' views are listened to carefully and their personal development is outstanding. The school works with the

pupils and together they promote a culture of high achievement. Year 6, pupils are mature, confident and articulate. They clearly enjoy school a great deal and demonstrate in their attitudes to learning a determination to get as much as possible from the school's rich curriculum provision. Because they have wide-ranging opportunities to work and play together across the age range they develop very mature social skills. This is demonstrated in their very welcoming attitudes, respect for others' differences and their care for younger pupils. It means that pupils are not ridiculed for demonstrating academic excellence or for seeking additional help. Behaviour is excellent because in lessons pupils' attitudes and motivation help create an extremely positive atmosphere. Pupils feel safe, not only because of the necessary underpinning of safeguarding which meets requirements and arrangements for their health and safety, but also because of the high quality of relationships which exist between adults and pupils. The school is a very friendly place. The school provides a very strong moral framework. It teaches pupils to recognise right from wrong, but as a pupil explained, 'You make the decisions and take the responsibility.' In all aspects of school life pupils are encouraged to make choices and recognise in the process not only their rights but also their responsibilities. As a result, they make an excellent contribution to their community and develop a keen awareness of how to look after themselves. Pupils explore the diverse society that makes modern Britain and through the international work and development of quality modern language links, pupils' cultural development is excellent. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is because the school's leadership works extremely well to unite the community. Leaders have evaluated provision in detail and planned action has already had a significant effect on pupils' values, for example, all say they would be happy to work with people from different communities. Because of their very mature outlook, high academic skills and opportunities to demonstrate initiative the school provides an excellent foundation for their economic well-being.

Provision in the breakfast club and after school club is excellent. There is a good range of well-planned activities in both settings. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and very young children have key workers who keep a very close eye on them. Very healthy food is provided. Extremely good attention is paid to the pupils' medical needs. Appropriate policies are in place and procedures are very clear. Rigorous attention is paid to the care and safety of children. Staff are very well qualified. Children are very happy and secure; this is reflected in one parent's comment that, 'I daren't come too early [to pick them up] as my children get a bit annoyed.'

There is a very strong senior leadership team and the impact of their work is evident in the improvements, which have taken place since the last inspection and in the current work on improving writing. Governance is excellent. Governors are highly involved and supportive yet clearly committed to ensuring that the school should provide pupils with the best of starts. They are prepared to question and where appropriate challenge the school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Highly reflective she promotes strong teamwork, high morale and a professional open culture where ideas are shared and people think carefully about what they are doing. She very effectively promotes the school as a community where all, pupils and staff are engaged in learning. Although innovative and creative in approach, this is rooted in rigorous management systems. A class poem describes her in a series of metaphors and captures essential strengths including, 'A tree spreading confidence; a diamond - firm but rare; always with a trick up her sleeve.' The white laboratory coats, so that pupils feel like scientists, the flowers on the Wroxham Cafe tables, the visually stimulating, delightfully incongruous vintage motor cycle and side-car in the school library looking as if it is an essential ingredient in an unwritten story by John Burningham are small examples of the school's leadership attention

to detail which cumulatively help make it so successful. The school has an extremely accurate view of its strengths and aspects which it wants to develop further. It has excellent capacity amongst its leadership to refine and improve the school even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make significant gains in their learning and their personal development is outstanding. Children play a major role in their learning, offering ideas and responding with enthusiasm. They show high levels of maturity, independence curiosity and concentration. There are excellent relationships with adults and other children. Children behave extremely well and work and play in harmony with children from different backgrounds and cultures. Adults have extremely good knowledge of individual children's learning and developmental requirements and this ensures that every child is challenged suitably and can succeed. Adults working in the Nursery and Reception classes have a common sense of purpose. Excellent use is made of the outdoor provision. The settings run very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Evaluation takes into account the views of children, parents and carers and all staff. Planning for 'next steps' in learning is leading to further improvement of provision and children's achievement. Welfare requirements are met. Leadership and management at all levels are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review the way books are displayed, promoted and 'signposted' in the school library to make it easier for pupils to make their choices.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

10 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Wroxham School, Potters Bar, EN6 3DJ

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome in your school. It is a very special place and we both enjoyed our brief stay very much. I enjoyed the assembly. Congratulations to the two pupils who led it. The drumming was very impressive. My thanks also go to the Year 6 pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to me. What you had to say was very helpful.

You and the staff have together created an outstanding school. I was extremely impressed with how you and the staff work together to create a school where high achievement is normal and where standards in your work are high. You behave extremely well and this means that in classrooms you really want to learn. The school provides you with a very rich range of activities and you all seem very determined to get as much out of them as you can. Athletes talk about achieving a personal best; in their training, they constantly battle to beat their personal record. You all seem to be engaged in a similar process with your academic work. You are clearly very motivated and want to do very well. Teachers and others provide you with highly skilled support to allow you to do this. It is this partnership that you have with teachers and other adults that allow you to succeed.

I was also impressed with your maturity, the care you show for others and how friendly the school is. In the playground, one child tripped over and fell and immediately he was surrounded by children expressing sympathy and checking he was all right. You take your responsibilities very seriously and make an excellent contribution to the school community. You clearly feel very safe in school and enjoy it a very great deal. You have developed the skills of making choices and therefore have an excellent understanding of how to look after yourselves. The school provides you with an excellent foundation for your future school careers.

Mrs Peacock leads the school extremely well. She has built a very strong team of staff. They all want you to do well and they care about you a great deal. I asked her to review the way books are displayed in the library so that finding the book you want is a bit easier.

Sincere good wishes to you all in your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector