

Wolsey House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120039
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	327183
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	419
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	Nick Dakin
Headteacher	Sue Barker
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beaumont Leys Lane Leicester LE4 2BB
Telephone number	01162 667566
Fax number	01162 681463

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils in this larger than average primary school are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Indian heritage. A small minority of pupils are at an early stage of learning English when they join the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average overall but can vary significantly from year to year. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is for children in Nursery and Reception. The school has received Healthy School status, the Activemark, Football Association charter mark and Environmental School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has benefitted from advice from the local authority and has made significant progress since the last inspection, particularly in the last four terms. A rigorous system is now in place to check pupils' achievement and to monitor the success of improvement initiatives. The school enjoys the wholehearted support of parents, who express such views as, 'I am really pleased with the progress my child is making. I am also impressed by the many extra-curricular activities which the school provides.' Parents are also rightly appreciative of the good pastoral and academic support their children receive. Pupils from a wide variety of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds get on very well together in class and around the school. As a result they feel safe and secure and grow in self-confidence. These factors contribute to the pupils' good personal development. Pupils, particularly the older ones, make a good contribution to the community through the school council and by caring for the environment. They also take on many responsibilities, for example, as play leaders and in supporting younger pupils in a variety of ways such as listening to readers.

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average overall. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age, especially in reading and in some mathematical skills. They make good progress and enter Year 1 in line with national averages. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 2 are average. Pupils make very strong progress, overall, in Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. Following successful initiatives to improve standards in writing, the school is now rightly taking action to close the gap between standards in mathematics and those in English and science. This good overall achievement, from below average starting points, and the best ever (unpublished) Year 6 test results for 2008 represent a substantial improvement since the last inspection. It arises from the fact that challenging targets are set for pupils and regular 'pupil progress meetings' are held where class teachers discuss the progress made by their pupils with senior staff. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are in danger of falling behind are now identified at an early stage and provided with appropriate support.

Teaching has improved and is now good overall. Teachers are using the more detailed information they have about their pupils to set work which matches their abilities. However, these initiatives have not yet had the same impact in Years 1 and 2 as they have in other parts of the school. Pupils in this key stage, particularly the more able, do not always make the progress they are capable of because they are not always provided with sufficient challenge. The broad and interesting curriculum is good overall, its strengths acknowledged by a number of awards. It promotes pupils' enjoyment and wider personal development well, and helps to ensure that most pupils make good progress in the basic skills and in information and communication technology.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and senior staff are now fully focused on ensuring that what they provide for pupils has the desired impact on their achievements and the standards they reach. They now have systems in place to help them to accurately evaluate the success of their efforts and are taking pride in the positive outcomes they are seeing. The school is well placed to make further progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a result of good links with parents and carers, clear routines and warm relationships, children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children are well motivated and clearly enjoy their time at school. They make good progress because of good teaching and a carefully planned curriculum. The activities led by adults are taught well, making learning fun and practical. Self-chosen activities are stimulating and make a good contribution to all areas of learning, particularly language development. Staff use questioning skilfully to develop the children's understanding and language skills without unduly disturbing their concentration or interest. The outdoor activities are well structured and cover all areas of learning. However, partly because of the constraints of the building, the outdoor area is not easily available to some classes, limiting its contribution to children's development. The provision for outdoor activities is satisfactory overall. Good leadership ensures that children are well cared for and that they are well equipped for the next stage in their education. As part of a whole-school drive to improve teacher assessment, children's progress is now checked in considerable detail. This is enabling adults to provide activities and experiences which meet the children's learning needs and has contributed to improving progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the improved assessment information more rigorously in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, are provided with activities which match their learning needs.
- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school to close the gap with those in English and science.
- Improve access to the outdoor area and give children greater opportunities to work and play outside.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is outstanding in English and science, and satisfactory in mathematics. Achievement is good overall. The school is now giving mathematics a higher priority in its school improvement plan in its efforts to improve achievement and raise standards. The recent improvements made by the school have not yet had the same impact in Years 1 and 2 as in other year groups. Early intervention and good support provided by well-trained, conscientious teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of learning English achieve at least as well as their peers because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development is reflected in their consistently good and often exemplary behaviour. They display positive attitudes to work and good levels of concentration in lessons. Most pupils attend well, although attendance is average overall because of the custom of some families to take extended holidays abroad. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is good, and helps to promote the atmosphere of racial harmony in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain but their knowledge of the wider world is less well developed. Pupils take enthusiastic advantage of the many sporting opportunities available and work in the school allotment helps to promote their good understanding of healthy lifestyles and environmental issues. Girls are fully involved in all sporting activities, including the football and rugby clubs. Pupils generally leave the school as sensible and responsible young people, with good basic skills, well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The improved teaching is most evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, with a corresponding improvement in pupil achievement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and pupils' achievement in these classes is satisfactory overall. This is because the new assessment information is not always being used well enough in these classes to match work closely enough to pupils' abilities. Pupil and adult relationships throughout the school are good with the result that pupils are not afraid to ask for help or to try new things. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils and use questioning well to develop their understanding of new ideas. Interactive whiteboards are used well to enliven lessons and motivate the pupils. Teachers speak to the whole class for an appropriate length of time and pupils have sufficient time to work on their activities, enabling most pupils to make good progress. The teaching of writing and science is particularly strong. Teachers successfully develop the imagination of their pupils in preparing for their writing activities. In science, the pupils thoroughly enjoy the regular opportunities they have to carry out investigations in pairs and small groups. These experiences enhance their personal development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

One of the strengths of the good curriculum, partly explaining why pupils achieve so well in English, is that activities frequently involve work in several subjects. These links help to ensure that the work provided is interesting and meaningful to the pupils. For example, pupils in Year 4, after watching a video clip and listening to sound effects, discussed and planned ideas and enthusiastically wrote about their imaginary experience of camping in the rain forest. Later, in a science lesson, they carried out a science investigation on materials to select the most suitable fabric for their tent! Opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum are much less well developed. Many after-school activities and good curriculum enrichment activities contribute well to the pupils' good personal development and understanding of healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers enjoy the many productions in which pupils display their musical and acting talents. These productions often celebrate religious festivals, helping to account for the good levels of self-esteem of pupils from all backgrounds. The choir regularly sings at the Lord Mayor's carol service and has sung at the Royal Albert Hall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their personal development because of the high quality pastoral care and good academic guidance they receive. Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds, and those who are vulnerable, are mostly supported equally well, although better use could be made of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to monitor and support pupils' progress. The school monitors attendance carefully and takes active measures to keep absence to a minimum. The requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met. The purpose of lessons is always made clear to the pupils. Marking is good, especially in writing, and pupils are given clear advice about their achievements and what they have to do to improve further. Targets are shared with pupils and their parents/carers through 'learning logs'. This innovative and exciting initiative, although very new, is already proving to be a powerful tool in providing information about pupils' achievements and next steps and is helping pupils to develop skills in evaluating their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is determined to maintain existing strengths and to bring about further improvements. Senior staff share her vision and are given the time and authority to carry out their roles effectively. Subject leaders are enthusiastic, pro-active and influential in raising standards in their subjects. Challenging targets for pupil progress are set and the good systems now in place help to ensure that pupils reach them. The headteacher has implemented an effective range of procedures to monitor the school's performance. Strengths and areas for improvement are shared with all staff, and teachers are provided with good support when necessary. In the past, progress has sometimes been slowed by questionable teacher assessment. Staff have worked strenuously to remedy this situation and it is an area they continue to monitor carefully. As yet, the improved leadership has not had a consistent effect on all subjects and year groups. However, the improving accuracy of teacher assessment is helping teachers to raise expectations of what their pupils can achieve and to set work which challenges them appropriately.

In this inclusive school, minority ethnic groups are represented on the governing body, in the teaching and support staff and on the school council. Some of the adults have important community contacts and language skills. The use of these helps to promote the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Governors are proud of the school and provide strong support. They are pleased with the new assessment data and believe that they will help them to develop their monitoring role, especially in relation to standards and achievement.

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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?	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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	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 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?	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?	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	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

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

6 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wolsey House Primary School, Leicester, LE4 2BB

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. We found that your school has made good progress since the last inspection and that it provides you with a good education.

Things we found out about your school

- Overall you make good progress in your work and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Standards in English and science are higher than those in mathematics.
- You behave very well in school. You enjoy your lessons and get on well with your teachers.
- Teachers are checking your work more frequently and in more detail. Because of this, in most classes they are able to set work which is at the right level for you.
- The adults in school take good care of you so that you feel safe and enjoy your education.
- Your school is well organised and adults are working hard together to make it even better than it is already.

What we have asked your school to do now to improve further

- Use the information they have about your abilities to make sure those of you in Years 1 and 2, especially those who find work easy, are always provided with work at the right level.
- Raise standards in mathematics in all year groups.
- Give the children in Nursery and Reception more opportunities to work and play outside.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard, behaving well and taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by school.

We would like to wish you all the best of luck for the future.

Don Mason

Lead inspector