

Widewell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113323
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338142
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rhodri Davey
Headteacher	Barbara Young
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, saw nine teachers and held meetings with staff, parents and carers, governors, trustees, community support staff, volunteers and pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at policies, documents and records of assessments and scrutinised the results of 50 parental and carer questionnaires

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of monitoring and assessment of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- pupils' progress in mathematics and the quality of teaching in this subject
- how well the school's partners support pupils' learning and progress

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school where almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The foundation trust provides support for outdoor education, for pupils with dyslexia and for those whose parents and carers are, or have been, members of the armed forces. Many of the school's families have a military connection of some kind. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average and there is a higher-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly dyslexia. A higher-than-average number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than those of normal transition. There is a private nursery provision on the school site and a community room specialising in family support and the arts.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Widewell provides a satisfactory education. Pupils are happy and most enjoy coming to school. The majority of parents and carers are very satisfied with the support that the school gives their children and the quality of its teaching. Pupils make broadly satisfactory progress, but those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with dyslexia, achieve well. Children make good progress in the Reception year and most are well equipped for learning by the time they enter Year 1. The good progress continues through Years 1 and 2, but in Key Stage 2, progress slows because teaching is not always pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities. Girls in general do not achieve as well as boys. Pupils' attainment, by the time they leave school, is average.

The school makes sure that all its pupils are safe, but has not been as thorough as it might have been in its record keeping about the welfare of all its pupils. Good links with partners support pupils effectively, particularly in providing opportunities for outdoor learning. Extensive support is also provided through the educational trust and from the armed forces, with which the school has a close relationship. Pupils behave well and understand how to live healthy lives. They look out beyond their immediate community, making connections with children around the world and across this country. The local community is exceptionally well served by the school and it is perceived as a highly cohesive force in the area. They care for each other and enjoy sharing experiences, such as singing, sports and eating together at lunchtime. Pupils enjoy a huge range of lunchtime clubs which all of them choose from and attend every day. The school is a highly cohesive society, an important factor in the lives of those many children who leave and join throughout the year.

The interesting, well-planned curriculum ensures pupils enjoy their lessons, but they are not always given enough chance to learn independently and at their own pace. They are not always given enough opportunities to put their learning into practice, particularly in mathematics. Progress in mathematics has been slower than in other subjects and the school has been working hard recently to improve this. Many pupils say they really enjoy their English lessons and progress is better in this subject. In English, pupils are given the chance to use their skills across a range of topics and activities, such as in poetry writing.

The school's leaders and managers check the quality of teaching and learning, but the effectiveness of this work is inconsistent. This is because they have not yet devised a clear programme for improving teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. The actions taken are beginning to improve progress in mathematics, but this is inconsistent across classes. Nevertheless, this demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for

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further improvement. Leaders and managers have directed much effort towards supporting the families of their pupils, through providing community learning, ways for parents and carers to help their children and a place to come and share problems. Teachers do not always use assessment information rigorously enough to inform their lesson planning. Pupils are not always sure of their next steps, particularly in Key Stage 2

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly for girls and in mathematics, by building on the recent rise in progress
- Carry out regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this to improve lesson planning
- Ensure regular and sharper monitoring of teaching and learning to increase the proportion of good lessons, enabling pupils to learn faster and more independently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in most lessons, though not always in mathematics. This is because they spend too much time in mathematics on acquiring basic numeracy skills and not enough on using and applying their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. However, a recent review of mathematics is ensuring the 'green shoots' of faster progress are beginning to show. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them to acquire knowledge and skills at a good pace. Pupils with dyslexia do particularly well in literacy where they often receive one to one support. Attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly average.

Pupils' learning was good where, for example, in a combined Years 4 and 5 English lesson, everyone was encouraged to take risks in expressing themselves. The objectives of the lesson were shared and pupils could cooperate together. Progress was only satisfactory in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils were not allowed to comment on each other's writing or evaluate how good it was.

Pupils' good behaviour contributes to their safety around the extensive school grounds and building. They enjoy sitting down together to eat a healthy lunch every day and participate with enthusiasm in the large range of challenges and activities afforded by clubs. There is plenty of sport and outdoor learning, both very popular, and pupils take the opportunities on offer to find out about others across the country and the wider world. They enjoy close links with some children in Germany, for instance. Pupils also make good contributions to their own school, serving in the school council and helping in clubs. There are good opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in many lessons and pupils are becoming very enterprising. They are currently working on a project that involves creating, marketing and selling a range of food products with the school's name on them. There is much enthusiasm about this initiative. They take part in music, such as in the brass band, and their efforts are highly creditable. They appreciate the need to take care of one another and enjoy enthusiastic

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assemblies where achievements are celebrated and good attendance encouraged. This has not quite paid off, however, because despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains at average levels because a small minority of pupils take holidays in term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are some good features within teaching, for example when pupils are encouraged to explore and speculate around their ideas for writing about their world, or try to capture through drawing how plants are structured. However, many lessons do not leave enough choice for individual pupils to pursue ideas, often to the detriment of girls' progress. For example, in an art lesson, pupils were not able to choose the medium in which to express their ideas, whilst in a science lesson pupils watched the teacher explore how objects behave when caught up in a sieve instead of finding this out for themselves.

Where teaching is more challenging and ideas are shared and debated, learning is much faster. For example, in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were encouraged to estimate and approximate without fear of getting the 'wrong answer', learning was successful and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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enjoyable. Where the objectives for learning are understood and reinforced and pupils are encouraged to feel confident in front of their peers, they make the best progress. In physical education, pupils really enjoy using their mathematical skills to record and share their 'personal bests', for example.

In the best lessons, teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' individual needs and build upon their previous learning, but this is not consistent in all classes. Pupils are not always fully aware of how well they are doing and marking does not always explain clearly what they need to do next. Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals who are slipping behind or need a boost in an aspect of their work. However, pupils have not always been given enough information about the way they will be assessed in tests. The school provides good support for its pupils' and families' personal and social needs. There is always someone on hand to discuss a problem and help to find a solution.

The curriculum provides good opportunities across the broad range of subjects to develop basic skills and understanding in English, mathematics and science and there is a good range of topics through which to express these skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum and this slows their progress in this subject. There is a very broad range of well-attended enrichment activities, plenty of trips and many visitors into school

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and recent reviews have started to raise attainment. However, monitoring is not yet sufficiently focused across subjects and there are inconsistencies between lessons. The school does not always accurately record its monitoring so teachers are unable to fully benefit from the process. Senior leaders are aware of this and are building on the strengths of the teaching force, for instance by encouraging the sharing of good practice. The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory because the leaders and subject coordinators share their ambition. For example, improvements in English came about through a concerted effort by staff to extend opportunities for pupils to enjoy writing creatively across all subjects. Governors provide a satisfactory level of challenge for the school. The new chair of governors is getting to grips with how best to support the headteacher in raising attainment, making effective use of data from tests and going into school to observe

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and comment on lessons. Governors have a clear vision for the school. The education trust ensures that the extensive site is safe, as well as providing good support for pupils with dyslexia and helping families. All staff are aware of safeguarding procedures and the school reviews and monitors its processes. However, there are a few instances where records are not always up to date. Parents and carers feel the school does well by their children, providing particularly well for their personal and social needs. The extensive range of partners engaged with the school enhances provision in the arts, enterprise and support for individual needs. The partnerships contribute much to pupils' personal development and well-being

Pupils are given equal opportunities to enjoy and learn and most do, but, although the school is taking steps to raise girls' attainment, their progress is still slightly behind that of boys. The community around the school benefits from its activities and it is a hub for pupils' families. Strong links with local services do much to promote pupils' understanding of the wider world. The links with a school in Germany, for example, provide excellent opportunities for pen-pals and many pupils have taken part recently in a whole community play in their local area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels that are lower than expected for their age. They achieve well and most children make clear strides in developing communication skills, being able to do things for themselves and finding out about the wider world. There is a well-planned range of activities for them to choose from to help develop their motor and number skills, letters and sounds, physical control

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and coordination. Children are encouraged and motivated, often demonstrating activities to their peers. They behave well and develop warm relationships with others. Adults explain to children how well they have done and what they need to learn next. They provide challenging tasks for the more able children that enable them to progress at a suitably rapid pace. Ongoing assessments provide useful information for parents and carers and indicate ways for children to move ahead.

The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has implemented several improvements since her arrival in September and her clear leadership is beginning to have an impact across all areas of learning. She has developed stronger relationships with families, a good relationship with the Nursery provider and better support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Forest School activities contribute greatly to children's enjoyment, particularly the more active learners and boys. Good induction arrangements help parents and children gain confidence in settling into the learning environment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are positive about the school. Most who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school provides a good education for their child and that their children are kept safe. Some parents and carers expressed concerns that the school does not communicate effectively with them and that their children are not being well prepared for their future lives. Some of these concerns were reflected in conversations between parents and carers and the inspection team. The inspectors found the school prepares the pupils satisfactorily for their future lives but does not always communicate effectively with parents, for example over changes to the way their children will be assessed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Widewell Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	40	28	56	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	50	25	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	26	28	56	8	16	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	30	30	60	1	2	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	17	34	27	54	2	4	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	24	30	60	4	8	4	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	40	26	52	4	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	22	26	52	7	14	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	24	31	62	2	4	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	36	28	56	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	22	26	52	5	10	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	15	30	26	52	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	44	23	46	2	4	2	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Widewell Primary School, Plymouth, PL6 7ER

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You behave well and this helps your learning. You have a good range of activities to choose from in lessons and at lunchtime and super grounds to play in. Your school does very well in supporting your families. You make a real difference to your school and local community by being ready and willing to take part and to take responsibility for each other.

We are pleased you are happy to come to school but understand that some of you feel that your work does not stretch you enough and that you are unable to get on with your learning at your own pace. We have asked your school to do a few things to make learning more enjoyable and to help you make faster progress:

- raise attainment, particularly for girls and in mathematics by building on your recent progress
- carry out more regular assessments of your learning and use this to improve lessons
- make sure all lessons are at least good, so you learn faster and more independently

You can help by always behaving well and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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