

Wilcombe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113342
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338147
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Rice
Headteacher	Gary Chown
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, and a number of shorter visits were also made to classrooms to look at, for example, samples of pupils' work. Eight members of staff were observed teaching. The inspectors held meetings with members of staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide variety of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation sheets, assessment records, safeguarding information and the reports from the School Improvement Partner. The responses from the staff and pupil questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from 33 parents and carers.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which teachers make suitable allowance in their planning for the different needs of pupils
- the extent to which the curriculum is enhanced through the use of cross-curricular links, especially in relation to developing writing skills
- the school's development of national and global links to enhance community cohesion.

Information about the school

Wilcombe Primary is smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception and Nursery, which work closely together in a Foundation Stage Unit. A children's centre and a child-care unit share the school site. Neither of these was part of the inspection. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

The school is part of a federation of three schools in and near Tiverton. The headteacher of Wilcombe is the executive headteacher of all three. The day-to-day leadership of Wilcombe is in the hands of the head of teaching and learning.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. It also has some exceptional features that result in a number of outstanding outcomes for pupils' personal development. Pupils greatly enjoy school, and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They feel extremely safe, owing much to the exceptional measures the school takes to safeguard them. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and the school's engagement with them is good. For example, one said, 'We are so glad we chose Wilcombe Primary School for our children.' During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve exceptionally well, although standards remain a little below average by the time they leave Reception. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average overall, although writing is a slightly weaker area. However, pupils make outstanding progress in science and attainment is above average by the time they leave.

Good teaching and a good curriculum are crucial factors in pupils' good progress. In class, relationships are strong, teaching assistants are deployed well and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting. Teachers provide clear instructions and advice for their pupils, although on occasions, opportunities are missed for pupils to respond by talking about their work to identify ways in which they might improve it further, especially in writing. The curriculum contributes well to both pupils' progress and their enjoyment of school. It is interesting and varied, and, for instance, helps to make the pupils very aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis being placed on further increasing the use of writing in other subjects, as this has not always been fully exploited in the past. The school has done much to promote community cohesion, both in school and locally. However, there is still scope to improve pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity to be found within the United Kingdom and internationally.

The executive headteacher, the head of teaching and learning, other members of staff and the governing body are a dedicated team, committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils. Self-evaluation is very successful in pinpointing where improvement is needed and the school has moved on significantly since the previous inspection. The benefits gained from being one of a federation of schools, such as the sharing of expertise and the professional and rigorous development of management and leadership skills, have greatly speeded up the pace of change, such as contributing to improvements in science. Morale is high, planning illustrates high expectations and there is a strong determination to succeed. However, as these initiatives have been introduced

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comparatively recently and the benefits have not yet had a chance to be become fully apparent over a longer period of time, the school currently demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing further by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their skills through the other subjects of the curriculum
 - pupils have enough opportunities to discuss their work, in order to identify how it might be developed and improved.
- Extend community cohesion further by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to find out about, and communicate with, people from cultures and backgrounds different from their own, both within the United Kingdom and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils really enjoy their learning, and in all lessons observed they were fully engaged. Work seen in lessons, as well as that recorded in their books, shows that their achievement is good, with the result that their overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. In a mathematics lesson seen in Key Stage 2, clear and helpful explanations from the teacher on techniques to help solve problems, ensured that pupils later employed these well in improving their skills in finding solutions. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well. In an English lesson observed in Key Stage 1, for instance, the teacher was most careful to include them fully throughout, so that they knew exactly what was expected of them. Boys and girls perform equally well. The pupils' achievement, together, for example, with their confidence in working collaboratively with others, means that the school is preparing them well for their future economic well-being.

Pupils clearly like school very much and this is reflected in their outstanding attitudes and behaviour, and their improving attendance. They have very sensible attitudes to their work, and are polite and courteous. They eat fruit and healthy meals, and readily take part in physical exercise opportunities. They say they are pleased to have contributed towards the Healthy Schools status. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their understanding of the multicultural society in which we live is less well developed. Pupils readily and conscientiously take on the many responsibilities that the school offers them. They are proud to be members of the school council, and speak with particular enthusiasm about their involvement in interviewing new members of staff. Pupils are also very involved in the local community. They take part in activities such as singing for local residents and being involved in clearing litter.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils, using a good range of resources and strategies. Relationships are a particular strength and, as a result, pupils are exceptionally well behaved, keen to learn and ready to work hard. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and to develop their understanding. Teachers usually involve pupils well in lessons, but on occasions they are provided with limited opportunity to talk about their work in front of the class, and consequently further develop and clarify their knowledge and skills. Teaching assistants are well deployed to promote learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although there are occasional exceptions, teachers usually use information on how well pupils are doing to plan carefully for the varying needs of the pupils in their class. Marking is used well to praise pupils for their efforts, but it is not always used so successfully in clarifying for pupils how to develop their work further. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the outstanding range of outings and clubs that enhance the curriculum. They also enjoy the learning opportunities provided in the school's very well resourced grounds. A particular strength is in the provision for

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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science, where the extensive use of practical activities has contributed significantly to pupils' outstanding progress. The school is rightly developing further cross-curricular links to produce a more innovative and exciting curriculum. In particular, the school recognises the need to make more use of writing in other subjects to help raise standards in English. The exceptional care, guidance and support provided for pupils contribute very well to both their enjoyment and their learning. Safety checks and risk assessments are rigorously carried out. Pupils are regularly reminded about the need to take care, for instance when using computers. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth entry of pupils to the school and to secondary school when they leave. The adjoining children's centre and child-care unit give strong support to the school's welfare of its pupils and their families beyond the school day, with pastoral care being a high priority. Outside agencies are used exceptionally well, especially in relation to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher and the head of teaching and learning, supported well by other members of staff, have been successful in creating a very caring and happy environment for the pupils. Very great care is also taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is evident in the school and that equal opportunities are promoted exceptionally effectively. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary, being consistently and rigorously applied to ensure that all pupils are highly protected. Safety and safeguarding permeate all aspects of school life. The school's self-review has been accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development, and current priorities, such as that in relation to further developing writing skills, are very appropriate. Community cohesion is promoted well in the school. There are strong community links both in school and locally. However, the school recognises that links beyond the local community are not so well developed. A useful start has been made through contacts established with schools in London and Uganda.

The school has very greatly benefited from the partnerships established through being in a federation of schools. For example, the sharing of teaching expertise has contributed to the raising of standards, especially in science, and the sharpening of leadership skills at all levels has allowed the school to clearly focus on ways to improve even further by producing exceptionally well-focused plans and setting ambitious

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targets. This, taken together with the significant number of outstanding features already present in the school, illustrates well the exceptional drive and ambition to continue to move the school on. Governors play their part well, both supporting the school and keenly monitoring all aspects of its provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start Nursery, their skills and experiences are low for their age. Through their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage they achieve exceptionally well, although by the end of Reception weaknesses in language skills mean that attainment is just below average overall. The children are very happy in school and they clearly enjoy themselves. Their behaviour is excellent and they are very keen to do their best with their work and rise to the challenges presented. The staff work hard to create a friendly, caring and rich learning environment, and the children also benefit from the very good links that are established with parents and carers and the adjoining child-care unit. Teaching is outstanding, and adults provide the children with an excellent balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for them to choose for themselves. They take every opportunity to help children develop their various skills. The children tackle their work with both enthusiasm and perseverance, happily working together, offering their own ideas and readily seeking help from adults when appropriate. Staff know the children well and the frequent observations and assessment of their progress result in fresh, well-matched tasks.

Facilities are excellent, with a much prized and very well used outdoor learning area. Children grow in confidence exploring their various capabilities in this delightful

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environment. The leader uses her expert knowledge and enthusiasm very well in making outstanding provision for the children, and other adults support her well throughout. Great care is taken to ensure that all children are equally involved. Safety and safeguarding are high priorities and the provision made for the welfare of the children is exceptional.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Although there was not a high response, an overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded were positive about the school's provision, both in terms of the care the school takes of their children and the progress it helps them make. Comments such as, 'The staff are very approachable and have the children's best interests at heart,' and, 'My child has always been happy at school and is making good progress,' confirm their view. No significant concerns were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wilcombe 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	76	7	21	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	70	10	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	73	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	55	15	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	55	14	42	0	0	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)	20	61	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	64	10	30	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	48	14	42	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	52	14	42	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	23	70	10	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0

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.



Friday 11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wilcombe Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 4AL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My colleague especially enjoyed talking to the school council. We liked joining you for assembly, and we also enjoyed coming into your lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what is good and what could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school where you are making good progress with your work. The executive headteacher, the head of teaching and learning and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

- These are some of the strengths of the school:
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start.
- Teaching is good and you are provided with lessons which you really enjoy.
- You do particularly well in your work in science.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are excellent.
- You have a good understanding of how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you very well and take very good care of you. As a result, you feel very safe.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things we have asked the school to improve:

- It should help you to improve your writing skills by giving you more opportunities to talk about what might be in your stories and also to give you more chances to write in subjects other than English.
- It should give you more opportunities to become aware of people from different communities and cultures in both this and other countries.

You can help by offering to share your ideas about a story with your teacher and the other pupils before you start writing.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin James

Lead inspector

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