

Wix and Wrabness Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114739
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338436
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Harmer
Headteacher	Lorraine Oldale
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2006
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom spent just half a day in the school to focus on safeguarding. The inspectors spent two-fifths of the time looking at learning, visited 10 lessons, and four teachers were seen. They held meetings with various members of staff, including the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the chair of governors and a group of pupils. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation and information to track pupils' progress. They also looked at samples of pupils' work. Staff questionnaires and 27 parent questionnaire responses were analysed.

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

- progress in mathematics
- whether improvements had been made in writing attainment in Year 2
- staff cohesion and the effectiveness of systems to improve the school further, given the large number of recent staff changes.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with four classes, including the Reception class. Apart from this class, they are all of mixed-age. Children begin the Reception class in September or January dependent on their fifth birthday. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is about the same as that nationally. While most of these pupils have learning difficulties, a minority have emotional problems. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities is much lower than usually found. The school has experienced staffing difficulties in the past two years and several changes of staff. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of its headteacher who has galvanised the staff effectively after previous difficulties. They are determinedly taking the school forward and work effectively as a team. While parents and carers have mixed views of the school, a parent accurately reflects the school's work when she writes, 'Teaching staff are always prepared to meet with me when convenient which has never been longer than the following day. Targets set for my children seem fair and I am made aware of these via meetings and the home-school book.' This is a welcoming and happy school with a good team effort throughout with all staff contributing to the family feel and pupils' sense of security.

Pupils enjoy school and are well cared for. They feel safe, as one says, 'because of all my friends around me', and express confidence in the staff's management of pupils, which results in good behaviour. They practise healthy life styles and suggest ideas for the lunch menu. The pupils contribute well to the local community, for example, by writing letters to the local council suggesting play equipment for local public spaces.

Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education. Teaching is improving quickly. Developments in the curriculum and systems to monitor teaching and learning are now firmly in place. Staff are being successful in new curriculum trials that link learning in different subjects. It is engaging the pupils more meaningfully in their work. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The writing weakness in Year 2 in 2009 is being overcome. While the mathematics curriculum has improved as a result of more practical working and the adoption of a recent calculations policy, it is too early to see the impact of these changes in pupils' progress. Staff's attempts to share this with parents have not been as successful as hoped because parents did not respond well to a meeting arranged for this purpose. Staff try hard to ensure that parents understand the calculation method for individual pieces of mathematics homework. Opportunities for investigation in science have been limited and this has contributed to a slight fall in results in the past two years. By contrast, pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and use computers well in their work. Although the school's work in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory, pupils do not have sufficient knowledge of the diversity of culture within the United Kingdom and globally. Given the improvements still needed in mathematics and science, and the satisfactory rates of progress, the school shows a sound capacity for further improvement. Leaders are keenly aware of the areas needed for further development and equally as keen to make these improvements and keep up the momentum of change.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' rates of progress and levels of attainment in mathematics by:
 - sharpening up mental sessions in mathematics lessons
 - using numeracy more extensively in different subjects.
- Increase attainment in science by Year 6 through:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations
 - making better use of mathematics to record results and draw conclusions.
- Enable the pupils to have a better understanding of diversity in belief and culture in the United Kingdom and globally by linking up more directly with areas different in character to that of the school.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, mainly matches that expected for their age. Despite the recent setback in writing in Year 2, it has been the strongest element of pupils' work over time as has English by Year 6. More-able pupils often do well for their age in this subject. Pupils have not always attained as highly in science and mathematics. They have insufficient opportunities to plan their own investigations in science. In mathematics frequent staff changes have resulted in inconsistency in teaching methods of calculation. The agreement of a calculation policy has addressed this. Pupils use computers confidently and make good progress. Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities make good progress in overcoming their emotional difficulties because of the effective care and support provided for individuals. They make similar rates of progress to other pupils in their academic studies.

Pupils feel safe in school and express confidence in the staff. They also have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe, for example, being wary of strangers and the danger of drugs. Pupils have a good appreciation of healthy food. They eat fruit and vegetables at lunchtime, and often make selections from the salad bar. They take part regularly in exercise. They contribute well to the smooth running of the school undertaking various roles. Older pupils help the younger ones at playtimes. Pupils engage well in local events and affairs. They invited local dignitaries to a street party and have approached the local council about making improvements to their own community. Attendance is above the national average. There is scope to extend pupils' appreciation of diversity more keenly in the United Kingdom and also globally.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships support a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils are confident to contribute ideas. They cooperate well in pairs to think ideas through. Lessons are planned effectively and pupils provided with activities that challenge them appropriately for their abilities. The teaching assistants support groups well. Teachers often supply printed statements for different pieces of work so that the pupils know what they should include in order to be successful, for example, when they write in different styles. Marking is frequently helpful and, together with individual pupil targets, supports the pupils' knowledge of how they are doing. The tracking of pupils' progress is improving quickly. Mathematics teaching has not always been secure but it is developing well under guidance, although mental sessions are not always brisk enough. Staff have not always given enough attention to investigative science. Sometimes expectations of pupils' presentation of work are not high enough.

The curriculum is developing well so that it is becoming more interesting for the pupils. Pupils were excitedly planning to visit the coast to look at a variety of features. They competently used the internet to look at photographic images of the area to be studied. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and supports pupils' good behaviour and, along with ICT, is a particular curriculum strength. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities which include opportunities for sport. Good use is made of literacy skills in different subjects but numeracy skills are used less well. The new approaches to engaging pupils more practically in mathematics are helping to increase the pupils' interest in the subject, but have yet to impact fully in improved attainment.

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The school recognises the need to provide more investigative opportunities for the pupils in science.

The staff take good care of pupils and child protection procedures are very secure. The school takes its responsibilities very seriously and has good policies in place to cover a range of matters that affect pupils' well-being. These are rigorously implemented. The school provides very well for pupils who experience emotional difficulties. One such pupil reported that this was the first school that had listened. The work of the recently appointed well-being mentor is increasingly influential in this regard. Good records are kept of pupils who may be vulnerable and the school has good links with other professional agencies to support pupils with different problems. There are good arrangements for inducting new children and their parents to the school and good links with the secondary schools in preparation for when the pupils leave.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is developing well under the headteacher's good direction. Her monitoring of teaching and learning is leading to significant improvements in the quality of teaching. Her own analysis of lessons is most thorough. Improved procedures are making a difference, but improvements are still needed in mathematics and science teaching. Senior leadership is working adequately to communicate ambition to staff, and bring about further improvement.

The governing body, too, is improving in the way that it manages the school and has become more effective. Governors visit more regularly now, and so have a better understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. As a result, they are more able to ask questions and challenge the school while recognising the need to attend governor courses to make them even more effective. The governing body has a broad plan for community cohesion and a recognition that more needs to be done to help pupils appreciate diversity, especially globally.

The school's evaluation of itself is honest and accurate and it knows where further improvements are needed, shown in the well constructed school development plan. Safeguarding arrangements are good because of the practical use of policies and the response of named people in fulfilling their roles in this regard well. The school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. It is becoming more successful in managing the organisation of different needs in lessons.

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Only a small number of responses were received and these expressed mixed views. The major concerns were about the management of behaviour, taking account of parents' suggestions and help to support their children's learning. Some expressed concern about homework and communication. The inspection found that the school manages behaviour well and a well-being mentor effectively supports pupils who have emotional problems. Behaviour is good and pupils confirm this. Questionnaires are sent regularly to parents and carers and the school acts on the responses appropriately. Opportunities have been provided for parents and carers to attend sessions to support their children's learning but there has been a poor response to these opportunities. The homework provided is appropriate for the pupils' ages and pupils are given good direction to undertake research at home to support their studies. Communication is regular, through fortnightly newsletters, the home-school book, texting and e-mail and the school is currently constructing its own website.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wix and Wrabness 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 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	56	9	33	3	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	48	12	44	2	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	37	10	37	4	15	2	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	19	12	44	6	22	4	15
The teaching is good at this school	7	26	13	48	6	22	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	33	8	30	5	19	3	11
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	41	15	56	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)	8	30	13	48	2	7	3	11
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	19	12	44	7	26	2	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	15	11	41	4	15	7	26
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	15	13	48	5	19	4	15
The school is led and managed effectively	5	19	15	56	2	7	5	19
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	30	13	48	1	4	5	19

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



Thursday 11 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Wix and Wrabness Primary School, CO11 2RS

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit. Thank you also for sharing your work with me and talking to me about what you do in school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory level of education that is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of your headteacher. I was impressed with your skills in ICT and the way in which you used these skills so well to help you with your learning. The staff take good care of you and you feel able to talk to an adult in school if you have a problem. In turn you get on well together and take care of one another. You are learning good attitudes for life. The teachers and teaching assistants are working effectively to make your lessons interesting and it is clear that many of you try really hard with your work. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics where you told me how much you are now enjoying your mathematics lessons. This is good because progress in mathematics and science is not yet as good as in English. □

I have asked the school to consider three things to improve the school further.

- to help you make better progress in mathematics
- to give you more opportunities to investigate in science
- to help you understand the different ways in which people live their lives, including their different beliefs and customs.

Thank you once again for all the help that you gave me and I wish you and your school well in the future. I hope that you will continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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