

Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117177
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338961
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Watts
Headteacher	Alison Emmerson
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
School address	Siccut Road Little Wymondley Hitchin
Telephone number	01438 354583
Fax number	01438 727597
Email address	head@wymondley.herts.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, observed small group sessions, attended assembly, had lunch with pupils and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at curriculum planning, information from the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision, samples of pupils' work, assessment and attendance data and safeguarding procedures. In total 64 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the amount of progress pupils make as they move through the school
- the impact of the school's work on raising standards in mathematics
- how the school ensures pupils cover all the key skills as required in the National Curriculum through their use of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC)
- with the new and relatively inexperienced staff, can the leadership and management of the school provide a good capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school serves the local area and attracts pupils from as far as Stevenage. Most of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average with a very small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than is found nationally. The Reception children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class with the youngest Year 1 children. The school has achieved the national Healthy Schools award. Since the last inspection, apart from the headteacher, there has been a complete change of teaching staff

.

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

This school gives a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils love coming to school, demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect for others. Phrases such as, 'everyone is friendly', and, 'teachers are nice', were repeated many times in pupils' comments. Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils know that they will be helped with any problem they may have and feel very secure. This enjoyment and strong sense of security is the result of the commitment of the headteacher, all staff and governors. In spite of the complete change of teaching staff, the headteacher has retained her tenacious commitment to driving up standards and retaining the strong 'family' ethos of the school. Parents and carers are equally supportive of the school, are very happy with their children's experiences at school and very confident about approaching the school with suggestions or concerns.

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because, currently, pupils' progress and achievement varies but is satisfactory overall. Standards are average, but more-able pupils are not doing as well as they might do in mathematics. The quality of teaching also varies and is satisfactory with a number of good features such as the very good relationships within classes. Teachers make effective use of the good topic based curriculum to make learning interesting and relevant.

Since the last inspection, until the change of staff, there were regular reviews of the school's work and successful action taken to secure improvements including raising standards in writing and making sure pupils know how to improve their work. The headteacher has a very clear picture of the strengths in the school's provision and where improvements are needed. The relatively new staff are working very well together as a team and are keen to take on responsibilities. They do not have management experience and have yet to develop their roles further in order to support the headteacher in rigorous monitoring of the school's provision to bring about improvement at a good rate. Consequently, the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - increasing the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils so that they attain even higher standards.
- Ensure teaching throughout the school is consistently good by:
 - monitoring rigorously and regularly lessons, planning and pupils' work
 - ensuring all lessons have introductions and work to challenge all pupils fully

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

- ensuring a good pace to lessons.
- Develop subject leaders' impact on the progress made across the school by:
 - developing their knowledge and understanding of what the data collected by the school tell about pupils' performance and what needs to be done to improve it.
- About 40% of the school's 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**

Attainment in Years 2 and 6 national assessments has remained broadly average. Fewer than expected Year 6 pupils do well for their age in mathematics. Since the last inspection, standards in writing have improved to an above average level in both year groups as a result of the school's focus on spelling and the use of writing skills in other subjects. Currently, the older pupils in Year 1 and pupils in Year 2 are working at a level above that expected for their age in some areas of mathematics. For example, they confidently double and halve numbers to twenty with many keen to apply their strategies to numbers up to one hundred.

Pupils apply themselves well to their learning and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They contribute a great deal to the caring ethos of the school and take pride in being helpers, house captains and members of the school council. They also take responsibility for organising fundraising activities for several national charities. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Older pupils can talk at length as to the amount of protein, fat and carbohydrate needed for a healthy diet although they do not always put this knowledge into practice. Pupils develop very good social skills and demonstrate a high level of care and respect for one another. Consequently, the youngest children are very confident that any of the 'big children' will help them should they be worried and all pupils say they feel extremely safe and are adamant that, 'No way is there bullying in our school.'

In all classes, pupils work very well together as when Year 5 and 6 had to calculate the area of various display boards. Pupils also take pride in their homework when they produce their topic folders on 'Inspirational Leaders'. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Rates of progress are good in Year 2 and increasing in Years 5 and 6. The introduction of text books to provide an extra, higher level of work for more able mathematicians is already having a good impact on pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and their progress. In some lessons observed, particularly in the introductions, there is not enough challenge in the questioning or in the work for the higher attaining pupils to make them think hard and extend their learning. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, engage well with their learning. They make at least satisfactory progress in developing the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics due to the impact of intervention strategies and skilled support from teaching assistants.

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

The school's partnership with Hitchin Boys School has had a very good impact on pupils' enjoyment of a range of sports and their success in local sports tournaments. Many pupils commented that they 'really like PE'.

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

How effective is the provision?

All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage them very well. They make very effective use of resources especially information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching across the school is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in some lessons where the pace was brisk and the expectations very high for pupils to work at a good rate. Teachers keep comprehensive records of pupils' progress and attainment but do not always use this information to plan precisely for the ability ranges within their classes. As a result, in some lesson introductions observed, more able pupils learned very little.

The school is making effective use of International Primary Curriculum topics to make learning relevant and enthuse pupils. For example, a recent Year 5 and 6 topic on democracy helped pupils learn the origins of democracy and relate it to electing their

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

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

own school council. All pupils learn French and are very keen to speak it. There is a good range of clubs which are well attended and which contribute to pupils' health and fitness as well as enabling pupils to develop such skills as sewing.

The pastoral care and support provided in the school is excellent. This care is exemplified in the way that all adults work together extremely well to ensure that all pupils, whatever their difficulties or disabilities, are able to take full advantage of all the opportunities the school has to offer. Through good partnership with parents, carers and with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, home and school work together very effectively to ensure success for individuals. Parents and carers speak highly of the school's efforts to secure support for them.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has maintained her ambitious vision for the school. The systems for monitoring the work of the school have improved so that self-evaluation is good. Inspectors confirmed the areas for improvement already identified. The headteacher has been very successful in fostering a good team spirit among new staff. However, the current situation of all teachers being new to the school, and relatively new to the profession, means that she does not have experienced colleagues to share management roles. Consequently, progress towards securing improvement is at a satisfactory rather than a good rate. Governors support the headteacher very well and seek and act on parents' and carers' views. They have correctly identified the need to develop a more precise understanding of the data available about pupils' performance so that they have a clearer picture of the progress pupils should make. Equal opportunities are promoted well because staff work diligently to break down any barriers to learning. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, updated regularly and known by all. Community cohesion within the school is good; the school is actively promoting links with the local neighbourhood gardening club and has just opened a club for the previous Year 6 pupils which is thoroughly enjoyed.

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

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	
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	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Within the overall satisfactory picture of effectiveness there are significant strengths. Resources for learning in and outside the classroom are good and the experienced nursery nurse provides excellent support both for the teacher and children. Very good relationships between children and all staff help them settle quickly and happily into the class. Parents value the home visits staff make before the children start at Wymondley. Given the small number of children who join the Reception class, the skills which they start with vary considerably year on year. Currently, the children in Reception started with knowledge and skills that exceed those expected of the age group. Children are very keen to learn and even when they are kept sitting for too long, are exceptionally well behaved. They work and play very happily together. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught systematically so that children are well prepared for future learning. Currently, children's learning is a little over-directed and they have few opportunities for making choices about what they want to be involved in. The headteacher has taken on the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and has secured the services of the recently retired leader of this class to mentor and support the new teacher. This is a very positive move and is already having a good impact on improving the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Responses in the questionnaire and informal discussions show that they feel the school has a great atmosphere and their children love attending. They say teachers are approachable and will always advise if asked how parents and carers can help their children at home. A very small number felt that Year 6 pupils did not have enough homework but from discussions with staff and pupils, and looking at homework projects, it appears that pupils have enough homework and they like doing it. Parents and carers have been consulted on the amount and timing of homework as well as many other aspects of the school's work. A small number felt that their children were not making enough progress. Inspectors agree that more progress could be made, especially in mathematics and discussed with the school ways in which this can be achieved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant 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 inspector received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	67	21	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	42	30	47	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	47	28	44	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	36	40	63	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	52	26	41	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	61	24	38	1	1	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)	29	54	22	41	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	47	28	44	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	53	26	41	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	41	30	47	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	50	27	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	58	27	42	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 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.



11 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant School, Hitchin, SG4 7HN

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. Like you, I think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. My particular thanks to those of you who sat and talked to me at lunchtimes. I found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you my findings.

This is satisfactory school. You told me that you enjoy school and I could see why, particularly when I saw the interesting topic work you have done. It was good to see the very keen and successful netball and football teams in assembly. You told me the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. I agree that teaching is satisfactory and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. I could see that you think about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. I noted that standards are around average and you are making steady progress but I think you may be able to do even better, especially in mathematics.

Your headteacher and governors provide sound leadership. I have asked them to do three things to make your school even better:

Make sure that all the teaching you get is good and that it makes you think and work hard

Help you do even better in mathematics

Make sure that your headteacher helps the teachers to use the information they have from the tests you do so that they can help her to make the school even better.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and I was very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.