

Wilbarston Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122004
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340067
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lawrence Dale
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Cruse
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent almost half of inspection time looking at learning. They visited seven lessons and observed all teachers and assistants who work directly with the pupils. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and pupils, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. They scrutinised 41 questionnaires returned by parents, 15 from staff and 56 from pupils.

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

- how well pupils achieve, particularly the more able
- how effectively assessment information is used to meet pupils' needs
- pupils' cultural development
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders and governors in bringing about improvement
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average and most pupils are from a White British background. Six out of ten pupils travel to the school from the surrounding rural area and an urban area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The headteacher and all teaching staff are new since the previous inspection. Two of the four classrooms in the main building are not in use because of problems with the roof.

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 caring and supportive school where every pupil is valued and staff constantly strive to meet individual needs. As a direct result, more able pupils achieve their potential and all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. The good quality of pastoral care, guidance and support and rigorous safeguarding procedures enable pupils to grow in confidence and to feel safe. Most are very polite, behave well and display very positive attitudes towards their learning. All are keen to contribute to their school community and take their responsibilities seriously. Older pupils care for and are considerate towards younger pupils, enhancing the strong family atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

The relatively new staff share the headteacher's ambition and have been successfully moulded into an effective team where spirits are high and there is optimism for the future. Effective leadership, management and governance have minimised the disruption to pupils' learning caused by the problems with the roof. Pupils benefit from the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. Their good attendance and pride in their school reflect how much they enjoy coming to school and how successfully they are motivated to learn and do well. Despite some fluctuating results at the end of key Stage 2, there is convincing evidence to show that standards are rising and the school is improving. The professionalism of governors, the headteacher's determination, and the commitment shown by all staff ensure that the correct priorities for improvement are identified and effective actions to bring about change are put in place. As a result, the capacity to sustain improvement is secure.

Most enter school with the skills expected for their age. The good quality of provision for children of Reception age ensures that most make good progress from their starting points. Opportunities to accelerate progress are sometimes missed when outdoor activities are not planned in sufficient detail to build on those indoors and children are unable to consolidate or extend key skills. Pupils' good progress continues throughout the school largely due to the quality of teaching, the timely and effective support from teaching assistants and pupils' own keenness to learn. Teachers' marking is meticulous but there is little evidence of pupils being given the time to respond to the often detailed marking comments. Furthermore, pupils' completed work, although above average in its content, is often untidy as there is no whole school approach to teaching pupils how to form their handwriting and present their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure termly planning for outdoor learning is

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more detailed and that closer links are made to indoor learning.

- Improve the standard and quality of pupils' work by:
 - providing pupils with the time to reflect upon and respond to teachers' marking comments
 - establishing a whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting and presentation of written work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. They describe the scaffolding and plastic sheeting that completely surrounds their school as 'like having a big white cloth over school' and quickly add, 'but we don't really mind because it doesn't affect what we do in class.' They enjoy excellent relationships with staff and concentrate well in lessons. This is ensuring that they develop the skills they need for future learning.

Attainment is improving largely due to the consistently good quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitude to school. Standards by Year 2 are generally above average in reading, writing and mathematics and achievement is good for all groups of pupils. Over the past four years, overall standards by Year 6 have fluctuated because of the relatively small year groups and impact of individual pupils' performance. Although standards by Year 6 in 2009 were below average in English and science and average in mathematics, effective teaching ensured that all pupils made good progress from their starting points. The current Year 6 pupils are a higher attaining year group and their good progress is resulting in above average standards in English and high standards in mathematics and science. The recent whole-school focus on improving writing is resulting in a greater consistency in the way writing is taught and standards. More able pupils are appropriately challenged and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the caring support and attention from staff and also make good progress.

Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. The pupils' questionnaire showed that a small minority expect their peers to behave even better. All respond well to the extra responsibilities they are given such as acting as playground buddies or running the healthy tuck shop. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to live healthily through the many opportunities to participate in sporting activities such as judo and tennis. Pupils say that they feel safe and the vast majority of parents agree. Pupils of all ages play an active part in school life and the school is an integral part of the rural community with strong links to the local church. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils demonstrate the necessary skills and personal qualities to live and work together and make school a harmonious and happy place. They also raise money to sponsor a child in India and were quick to organise events to support the earthquake survivors in Haiti.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Staff share the headteacher's ambition for the school and work effectively as a team to continuously improve the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning. As a result of the consistently good and, on occasion, outstanding teaching, attainment is rising. Pupils happily come to their scaffolding-clad school and those having to work in the library or hut class say that they do not mind as they enjoy lessons. This is a reflection of the quality of teachers' lessons which are carefully planned to match work closely to pupils' individual capabilities. Planned tasks are invariably interesting and successfully engage pupils. In two outstanding lessons, pupils were highly motivated and inspired as they interrogated data bases or learnt how to write a biography for a famous person. Staff know pupils well as they usually have them for two years in the mixed-age classes and are able to effectively meet their individual learning needs. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress and staff use the information effectively to plan carefully to meet each pupil's needs. Teachers' marking is thorough with helpful comments on how to improve the quality of their work. However, there is little evidence of pupils responding to these comments to make their work better and there is too little emphasis on handwriting and presentation.

Work is in progress to further improve the curriculum and make it more creative. Planning ensures pupils draw on a broad range of skills from different subject areas when completing tasks. As part of their World War Two topic, for example, pupils use

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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mathematic skills to measure ingredients to make biscuits from mashed potatoes and oatmeal. The curriculum is well-adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and booster classes are impacting positively on raising standards. A remarkable range of learning opportunities for such a small school is provided through lunchtime clubs such as curling, prayer club and circus skills. Visits and visitors with specialist music and sporting expertise further enrich the curriculum. There are effective programmes for providing for pupils' personal development which successfully develop their self-confidence and empathy with others. Pupils' achievements and positive attitudes are celebrated in weekly assemblies which are exceptionally well attended and enjoyed by proud parents. All vividly remember seeing the ashes of their headteacher's pet when studying Buddhism and sharing the loss. Arrangements for ensuring pupils safety and well-being are robust and these help pupils to feel safe and valued. Good links with pre-school groups and secondary schools ensure pupils confidently move to the next stage of their education.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly effective headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has succeeded in establishing an ethos which is fully focussed on improving the quality of provision and raising pupils' attainment. Discussions with staff and their responses in the questionnaires clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm and wholehearted commitment. Following the many changes of staff, leadership roles and responsibilities are being effectively developed.

The governors are well led and organised by an astute and very experienced chair person. They are providing effective support and challenge by becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school. The headteacher and governors have been modest in their evaluation of the school's work but all have a clear view of what works well and the priorities for improvement. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully improved.

The school has an excellent relationship with parents and carers, keeping them informed, regularly seeking their views and involving them in their children's education. Partnerships with other providers and organisations are outstanding, ensuring the needs of all pupils are met. For example, staff share with pre-school groups weaknesses identified as children enter Reception so that they can concentrate on these and help

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prepare children better. Wilbarston is an inclusive school and actively promotes equality of opportunity by monitoring the performance of different groups of pupils and taking action to remove any obstacles to learning or pupils' well-being. Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and found that they meet requirements, are consistently applied across all aspects of the school's work and are regularly and rigorously reviewed. Safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work and staff respond promptly to any concerns raised.

The school is a cohesive community and overall, makes a good contribution to community cohesion in the local and wider world communities. The school has thoroughly evaluated the impact of its actions and has plans to further improve each strand of community cohesion have recently been put in place. Staff provide varied experiences for pupils to understand and engage with other cultural groups through lessons about other religions and links with schools which have many more pupils from minority ethnic families.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class which also has some Year 1 children. Knowledge and skills on entry are broadly average. The vast majority of children make good progress relative to their starting points in all areas of learning. Children make particularly good gains in their personal, social and emotional skills because of the good quality of provision for them in the spacious accommodation and outdoor area. Most reach and some exceed the expected goals by the time they transfer to the Year 1 curriculum in the Reception class or the Year 1 and 2 class.

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Children settle in quickly, behave well and demonstrate good levels of independence in their learning both indoors and out. 'Used to be clingy but much more confident now' was a typical parent's view. The extremely attractive and well-organised learning environment successfully fosters children's enjoyment of school. Children's learning and progress are carefully assessed, giving staff an accurate picture of how well they are doing. Planning builds progressively on skills and ensures a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities such as acting out stories and tossing pancakes. However, termly planning does not always link learning outdoors to the skills being promoted indoors.

Leadership and management is in the hands of an experienced teacher who ensures that policies, records and procedures for children's safety and welfare are in place. There are excellent links with parents and carers and families receive useful support and advice on how to be involved in their children's learning.

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

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about school. 'Over the moon' and 'wonderful school' are typical comments from parents who responded to the questionnaire. A very small minority of respondents indicated that they felt unhappy about their children's progress and preparation for the future, and how the school helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors do not agree with these negative views finding that this is a good school which enables pupils to make good progress and is preparing pupils well for their future. A number of parents expressed concerns to inspectors about the closed classrooms and lack of progress to repair the roof. The inconvenience is managed well by staff, and pupils say that it does not matter to them or affect their enjoyment of school and their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wilbarston Church of England 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	73	7	23	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	73	7	23	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	33	18	60	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	50	11	37	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	43	13	43	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	33	19	63	1	3	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)	6	20	16	53	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	40	15	50	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	37	15	50	2	7	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	43	12	40	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	63	10	33	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	70	7	23	1	3	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 pupils' 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.



Monday 1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wilbarston Church of England Primary School, Wilbarston, LE16 8QN

Thank you for making me and my colleague feel so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you. Your good attendance and good behaviour shows how much you enjoy school. You really impressed us with your knowledge of a healthy lifestyle and the contribution you make to school and your community.

Yours is a good school and we are sure that you know this from your comments to us. Everyone gets off to such a good start in Reception. We saw how much fun you have working and playing indoors and outside. All your teachers work very hard to plan some interesting and exciting things for you to do in lessons and in the various clubs. Not many schools offer judo, curling or circus skills. Your parents are happy that you have the opportunity to learn so many new skills. We particularly enjoyed your assemblies and are amazed by how many of your parents come to watch Friday's celebration assembly and their support in general for school.

It is good to see your work is improving, particularly by the time you are in Year 6, and the good progress most of you make. Your headteacher has high expectations of you all and governors are equally determined to make your school one of the best. We found some things that need to be improved. We would like to see more detailed plans for activities outdoors in Reception and we think that when teachers have marked your work, everyone should be given the time to make it better. It might mean that some of you have to do things again. Keep trying to do your best every day and show everyone how neat you can be when working in your books.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection. We hope that it will not be too long before your school roof is repaired and the scaffolding and plastic cover have gone.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock

Lead inspector

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