

Wiveliscombe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123713
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340405
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Parker
Headteacher	Tony Halstead
Date of previous school inspection	5 April 2007
School address	North Street Wiveliscombe TA4 2LA
Telephone number	01984 623325
Fax number	01984 623534
Email address	office@wiveliscombe.somerset.sch.uk

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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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, sampled several sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage and held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' progress, a sample of their written work, a range of policies and planning documents, development plans and questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Years 3 to 6. Seventy questionnaires completed by parents were analysed.

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

- the quality of provision for, and the progress made by, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils' progress at Key Stage 1
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum are meeting the needs of higher-attaining pupils throughout the school
- arrangements to support pupils learning English as an additional language.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with eight classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils speaking English as an additional language have joined the school in recent years. Class organisation changes frequently as the number of pupils in each year group varies considerably. At the time of the inspection, most of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were being taught in a Reception class, with a small number in an adjoining class with Year 1 pupils. There have been several changes of staff in the last few years, often with temporary arrangements being made to cover for long-term absences. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2008. Some middle managers have recently taken up their posts.

The school has gained a large number of awards, including Healthy School, Activemark, Silver Eco, Artsmark Gold and the International Schools Award.

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

'A happy, friendly and fun learning environment.' This comment from one parent summarises the views of the vast majority, who commended the positive ethos of the school and the range of experiences provided for their children. Their confidence is well founded. This is a school where individual children are well known by all staff, including the headteacher, whose pastoral leadership is a particular strength. Pupils are offered an exceptionally broad range of learning experiences, which includes clubs, opportunities for instrumental tuition, a variety of visits, participation in special events and links with schools in countries such as Zambia and New Zealand. This has a very positive impact on their personal development. Pupils learn how to work collaboratively and show a sensitive understanding of the needs of others, particularly those who may be less fortunate than themselves. The oldest pupils are confident and articulate young people who are well prepared for the move to secondary education and for later life.

While the pastoral aspects of the school's provision are strong, the academic elements have been affected by recent and frequent staffing changes which have affected pupils' progress. Children join the Reception Year with skills broadly in line with those expected. Over time, they make the gains that they should and standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. However, there is unevenness in the rate of progress in different year groups and subjects. Children make good gains in the Early Years Foundation Stage but momentum slows in Key Stage 1. Over the past three years, pupils have not achieved as well as they should by the end of Year 2. Not enough use is made of the information on their attainment at the end of the Reception Year to set high expectations of what they should achieve and to analyse data on their progress to check that all are on track. Pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 are making up lost ground at a good rate so the vast majority are attaining standards at least in line with expectations.

Over time, pupils' performance in national tests has been stronger in mathematics than in English. In the latter subject, reading is stronger than writing. This is an area targeted for improvement but the action taken is fairly recent and it is too early to see the impact, particularly in ensuring that more capable pupils attain the levels that they should. While pupils often make good use of language in their written work, their skills in organising and presenting it have an impact on the overall quality. The range of opportunities to write in a variety of subjects is being extended, but even higher-attaining pupils rarely make decisions about how to present their written work.

While the school has accurately identified key areas for improvement, several planned developments have been affected by frequent changes in leadership. The subject leader for English, for example, has changed four times in the last three years. As a result, a rise in standards is being achieved at a slower rate than senior leaders would wish.

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However, despite the difficulties, there has been progress. Pupils in the current Year 6 are set to attain above-average standards at the end of this year, indicating that the school has sound capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good start that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to accelerate their progress throughout Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that teaching meets pupils' needs, in particular by raising expectations of their capacity to achieve
 - implementing more rigorous tracking and analysis of assessment data to check whether progress is being consistently maintained.
- Improving standards in writing for all groups, but particularly for higher-attaining pupils, by:
 - improving pupils' skills in spelling and punctuation so that work is well presented
 - extending opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes
 - enabling pupils to make decisions for themselves about appropriate ways to present their work in a variety of formats.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are generally keen and interested learners. This is apparent in most lessons where they readily offer their ideas and work well in pairs and small groups at the tasks that they are given. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils talked animatedly about the means by which a variety of fruits from around the world might be transported to shops in Wiveliscombe. During a guided reading session in Year 5, a group of pupils playing a version of 'boggle' compared their lists of possible words and competed good naturedly as they tried to get the longest one possible. Where work is appropriately challenging and engaging, pupils achieve well in lessons. However, this is not yet consistently established across the school, which is what leads to the variation in rates of progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, particularly when they work with teaching assistants in small groups. These pupils make progress in line with that of their peers, and some make rapid gains as a result of focused intervention programmes. In this respect, tracking data are used well to target those pupils who may be falling behind. Data are not used as effectively to analyse rates of progress for middle and higher attainers to ensure that these groups are making gains at a consistent rate in each year group.

Pupils' appreciation of the wider world and their responsibilities within it is exceptionally strong. They are open to new ideas, have a good understanding of a range of moral issues and empathise with those less fortunate than themselves. In discussion, Year 5 and 6 pupils showed good understanding of the differences in their educational

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experiences compared with those in the linked school in Zambia, for instance, in the use of computers to support teaching and learning. Pupils have a strong sense of community and willingly take on a range of responsibilities, including organising some clubs, under staff supervision, and a variety of fundraising events. The school council makes a good contribution to decision making, for example, about the redesign of the adventure play area. Pupils understand many of the factors which may impact on their health and well-being and many participate regularly in a range of sports-related activities. They are clear that there is very little disruptive behaviour or bullying. As one said, 'We all get on so well here, there really isn't any trouble and you can always find someone to talk to.'

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	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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

While there is good teaching in many lessons, the quality is variable across the school. Some lessons are conducted at a good pace and with all pupils engaged in purposeful activity from the introduction onwards. In other instances, the aims of the lesson are not always made clear and pupils are unsure about the purpose of the activities that they

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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undertake. Expectations of work rate and of pupils' potential to achieve are not always high enough, particularly in Key Stage 1. Relationships in almost all lessons are very positive and teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra help to concentrate or to understand their tasks. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported so that they quickly make gains in their use and understanding of the language.

The curriculum offers a wide range of experiences and there are particular strengths in provision for aspects such as art, music and sporting activities. These make a good contribution to pupils' personal, social and cultural development. Several parents expressed appreciation of the good extra-curricular opportunities, including clubs and swimming lessons at the local pool. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning across a range of subjects. In most respects, the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and interests and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Account is taken of pupils' prior experiences, but planning does not always reflect the need to extend their skills and competences, particularly if they are capable of moving on quickly in their learning. Provision for writing is an area under development, with plans in hand to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in subjects across the curriculum.

There are well-organised arrangements for the care of pupils, particularly if they need extra help to cope with personal or learning difficulties. The school is quick to provide additional support through specific programmes where appropriate. Parents are very positive about the way in which their individual children's needs have been met. One commented, for instance, on the way that a child with serious health problems has been helped to catch up with work missed. Another, whose child has recently joined the school after unhappy experiences elsewhere, praised the way he had been helped to settle and the transformation to 'a very happy enthusiastic boy, keen to go in each day'. Induction arrangements for children starting school and transition for those moving on to secondary education are well organised so that pupils feel confident about approaching a new stage in their lives.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other leaders and managers are keen to see further improvement to various aspects of the school's provision. Action plans are in place for key areas, such

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as improving achievement in writing. These plans set a clear direction, but activities planned are not always based on rigorous analysis of pupils' performance and an audit of the quality of provision. As a result, criteria for evaluating success are not always clear and measurable. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is recorded systematically and targets are set for their attainment at the end of the year. However, the information generated is not analysed to evaluate the extent to which these targets are being met so that pupils stay on track and fully achieve their potential.

The governing body has recently reorganised its committee structure and key governors have undertaken training to strengthen their role in strategic management. Governors themselves recognise that they need to focus more on the school's performance and to ask searching questions about standards. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are particularly effective in ensuring that expenditure is closely monitored and the budget well managed. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous, with well-developed systems for staff training and assessments of any risk to pupils. Issues about safety and safe practices are integrated into the curriculum so that pupils themselves are well aware of their importance.

The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion at all levels. Pupils are proud of their school and have a well-developed sense of their responsibilities within it and their roles in the wider community. An environment club enhances their awareness of recycling and growing their own produce; links are made with a local sustainability group to promote energy saving initiatives. Pupils contribute to a variety of events within the locality, including competitive activities at county level. Visits to places such as Bristol and links with schools overseas raise their awareness of the diversity of lifestyles represented in modern Britain and globally. The school is a very inclusive community that welcomes pupils from all backgrounds. There is no room for discrimination and pupils have a good understanding of the need to tackle issues such as racism. While there is clear information about the groups represented within the school, there is limited analysis of how these groups are achieving so that leaders can evaluate, for example, the relative progress being made by boys and girls.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress as a result of a well-planned curriculum that takes account of their needs and interests. The vast majority attain good standards in most areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting language skills and most children are confident in contributing their ideas in whole-class and small-group discussions. An intensive programme for teaching early reading skills has been implemented as a result of staff identifying that there is scope to improve progress in aspects of early literacy. Opportunities to write regularly have also been increased. Children are showing good knowledge of a range of letter sounds and are beginning to recognise, and attempting to write, commonly used words, but it is too early to evaluate the overall impact of the new approaches.

A good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated tasks means that children learn to organise a range of activities independently. Several showed sustained concentration in practical activities, such as sorting coins into groups with the same value. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that individual children are well supported and that their learning needs are effectively met. Individual progress is carefully assessed from the beginning to the end of the Reception Year. As in the rest of the school, the information is not regularly summarised to inform an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in different areas of learning.

Staff are continually seeking ways to enhance children's experiences. A relatively new outdoor area is used well for a range of physical and creative activities, but resources are somewhat limited and this creates difficulty in offering the best quality opportunities to learn across all areas. Parents are involved in regular discussions about their children's learning and development. Several commented on the good start that their children have made, praising staff as 'very parent-friendly' nothing is too much trouble'.

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	3

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Views of parents and carers

All parents expressed satisfaction with their child's experience at this school. The vast majority were positive about almost all aspects of the school's work. A few raised a variety of issues that have been discussed with senior staff. There were no specific concerns that needed to be investigated during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wiveliscombe 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	73	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	59	29	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	39	38	54	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	40	36	51	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	59	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	44	35	50	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	53	31	44	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)	29	41	31	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	47	32	46	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	40	33	47	6	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	34	49	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	56	27	39	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	67	23	33	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.



7 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wiveliscombe Primary School, Wiveliscombe TA4 2LA

You may remember that a team of inspectors visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who talked to us about your work in lessons and the activities in which you get involved. Particular thanks to the group of Year 5 and 6 pupils who met with us to share their experiences and views about how the school helps them to learn. I thought you might be interested in what we are saying in our report. Your school provides you with a sound education and does some things particularly well.

These are the good aspects that we found.

- You have lots of opportunities to participate in clubs, visits and special events. This helps you to learn a good deal about the wider world.
- You work well together and, as you go through the school, you become mature and confident.
- The school takes good care of you and makes sure that you get extra help if you need it.
- The people in charge are always looking for ways to make your experiences even better. We saw the exciting plans for the new adventure playground that the school council has helped to design.

We have suggested two things that the school needs to do now.

- Make sure that the good start that you get in the Reception Year is built on so that you keep learning quickly in Years 1 and 2.
- Help you to improve your written work so that you do as well in this area as you do with reading.

You can help by working hard on the presentation of your work and thinking carefully about spelling and punctuation.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Billington

Lead Inspector

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