

Widcombe CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109259
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	356511
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Rob Trickey
Headteacher	Kate Wilkins
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2007
School address	Pulteney Road Bath BA2 4JG
Telephone number	01225 310139
Fax number	01225 318310
Email address	widcombe_jun@bathnes.gov.uk

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Inspection number	356511

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 assesses 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 0300 1234 234, 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 1234 234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and nine teaching staff. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from staff, pupils and 114 parents and carers.

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

- How well the school uses assessment to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.
- How the leadership and management have improved the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Whether pupils understand how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

Information about the school

Widcombe CE Junior School is an average size school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Where pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, these most often relate to difficulties with literacy. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average, but rising. The school has received Healthy Schools Award, Gold Arts Mark and Active Mark.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils thrive in this outstanding school which has undergone a radical transformation during the last three years. Leadership is outstanding, especially by the headteacher. Pupils benefit from an exciting and challenging curriculum and excellent care, which means that they are able to achieve at a high level. Parents and carers agree with the inspectors that the school is a happy, positive and inclusive one where the children are well stimulated and encouraged to respect and help others. As one parent put it, 'My child thoroughly enjoys every aspect of school life.' Pupils explained how they are enthusiastic and proud of their school, noting in particular how they feel cared for and never let down. The care given to pupils is enhanced by the exceptionally well established links with outside agencies. The school gives very good value for money and ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and needs are given equal opportunities.

As a result of effective self-evaluation, development planning and actions, school leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for further development. Since the last inspection, this has allowed them to focus on actions that have led to significant improvement in all areas of school life. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity to make further improvements and leaders are keenly working to make teaching and learning outstanding overall in the future and to develop wider community cohesion.

Pupils are very articulate and confident. Their behaviour is excellent; they care about each other and thoroughly enjoy working together, whether in their peer groups or across the ages in house groups. They have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and many take advantage of the wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities. The school has worked hard to develop pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures, but pupils are not yet fully aware of the multicultural society that they are part of.

The well-planned induction process, praised by many parents and carers, means that pupils settle quickly when they enter the school. Pupils make good progress and leave school very well equipped for the future with levels of attainment that are well above the national average. The large majority of teaching is good, with some outstanding teaching. A strong feature of the learning is the way all pupils are helped to assess their own work and know what they must do to improve. Newly trained teachers quickly settle in and develop their skills because of good mentoring.

The governing body play an active part in the strategic development of the school and monitor the work of the school thoroughly. Safeguarding is outstanding and takes the highest priority. Parents and site staff have been involved in ensuring that the site is

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

secure. There is an excellent understanding of the school and the local community, but the extension of this to communities beyond the immediate locality is in the early stages of development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the pupils' understanding of living in a multicultural society by providing more opportunities for them to experience a range of cultures and contrasting localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve outstandingly well and are very well prepared for their future lives. They start Year 3 with above average levels of attainment and leave Year 6 with attainment levels that are consistently well above average in all subjects. Pupils who arrive at the school speaking English as an additional language are well supported through personalised plans and this enables them to make the same good progress as other pupils. There is a focus throughout the school on ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are able to assess how well they have done; this, when coupled with the high quality help, enables this group to learn well. The time given for all pupils to respond to suggestions for improvement means that all pupils make good, and sometimes exceptional, progress. Learning is good and pupils enjoy what they do. This was very evident when Year 4 pupils responded enthusiastically to their teacher's reading of a humorous poem and were able to talk of the poem's style and effects and find these in other poems.

Pupils are well equipped to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school. For example, they assess risk for themselves, as in science lessons when they ask the question, 'How am I going to keep my investigation safe?' The awards of Healthy School status and Active Mark are reflected in pupils' very good understanding of how to eat healthily and engage in plenty of exercise.

Pupils' caring, safe behaviour ensures good relationships. All pupils are confident that the adults are there to help them resolve any difficulties they may have and they are confident that there is no bullying. Pupils share their opinions and enjoy making decisions about life in school. For example, pupils in Year 6 write their CVs and apply for posts in the school, such as librarian, and undergo interviews. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school, as is evident in a huge variety of ways, not least when taking part in concerts and when the Robotics team have represented their school at an international level.

The Christian ethos, as part of the Charter for Excellence, encourages pupils to strive for excellence in all areas of their lives. Pupils' commitment to the charter is demonstrated in the comment, 'It makes our school a better place.' The many artistic opportunities offered to pupils are reflected in the award of the Gold Arts Mark and pupils are proud of their work displayed around school. Pupils care for each other and respect each other's differences. However the pupils' very good understanding of their school and

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

local community is not yet fully reflected in their understanding of the wider diverse culture of Britain.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is at least good because teachers plan carefully from the skilled assessments that give them a good knowledge of how well pupils understand their work. Tasks are suitably challenging for all pupils and very effective use is made of talented teaching assistants who support a range of groups within lessons. The higher ability pupils are well challenged, particularly in mathematics with opportunities to work together on higher level problem solving activities.

with opportunities to work together on higher level problem solving activities. Lessons are lively and fast-moving. Year 3 pupils enjoyed the stimulus of a lit candle to inspire exciting words for writing calligrams. Pupils respond well to the consistent use of strategies such as the 'countdown' to call the class together at different points in the lesson. Marking is effective, with strengths identified and a development point given. Pupils have regular opportunities to address these comments.

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

The curriculum excites the pupils. They speak enthusiastically of the many topics, such as developing a dance in response to an air raid siren as part of the Year 6 study of the Blitz. Many visits and visitors enrich these studies further. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities run by staff, parents, sports coaches and other professionals.

Pupils are very well cared for and particular attention is paid to ensuring that transition procedures enable vulnerable pupils to make a secure and happy move. Pupils in Year 6 are confident about their future education. Above average attendance is supported by rigorous procedures that challenge any absence. Close work with other agencies, together with clear plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensure that all staff support these pupils to achieve their very best. Pupils speak very positively of the support they receive and comment: 'I am always encouraged to have a go.'

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear vision of how to continue to improve the school and is fully committed to raising attainment further and providing the best possible education for all pupils in the school. She is very well supported by the senior leadership team and staff who are a very effective and hardworking team. The monitoring of teaching and learning is extremely thorough, involves the headteacher and subject leaders and has had a significant impact on the improvements made in the school. New staff are well supported through induction and mentoring to quickly be able to use whole-school strategies confidently and effectively.

The governing body has a good knowledge of the school. They are actively involved at all levels and regularly take part in school life. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. They promote and monitor equal opportunities well and ensure that all pupils and staff feel valued. As reflected in the care shown, there is an exceptionally rigorous approach to safeguarding procedures. In particular, governors and staff are very knowledgeable and monitor and evaluate practice very closely.

Most parents speak very highly of the school and comment very positively about the improvements that have taken place. They are kept informed through weekly newsletters, parent mail and a very effective website. The link parent attached to each class provides a further source of information. Many parents and carers regularly help in

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

school. Governors are ambitious and keen to further develop the links with parents and carers. The partnerships with different organisations are very strong, including with the local schools and university, all of which help to broaden the pupils' experiences. There are strong local community links but leaders recognise that wider community cohesion could be strengthened further by helping pupils to develop a broader understanding about the full range of cultures, religions and social diversity in the United Kingdom today. Leaders have clear ambition, drive and ideas of how to develop this and plans are already underway.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of inspection questionnaires returned is high. Parents and carers are mostly very supportive of the school and their responses mainly positive. A few comments identified areas of concern, such as the progress their children make and the school not taking note of parent and carer concerns. Inspection evidence suggests that the school ensures that all pupils make at least good progress. There are a range of methods the school uses to communicate with parents and carers. Parents and carers have very good opportunities to speak to staff and express their views but the school acknowledges that some parents and carers feel that their views are not taken note of; leaders and staff are anxious to find further ways of engaging this group.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Widcombe CE Junior 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	61	41	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	62	41	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	42	48	42	5	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	32	50	44	10	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	50	43	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	44	50	44	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	59	41	36	2	2	2	2
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)	58	51	38	33	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	35	49	43	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	33	55	48	8	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	30	51	45	14	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	44	45	39	5	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	52	46	40	5	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Widcombe CE Junior School, Bath BA2 4AG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons, talking to you and reading your responses to the questionnaires. Yours is an outstanding school and, as a result, you achieve outstandingly well overall and make good progress in your learning. There are many excellent things about your school.

- You behave very well, look after each other and tell us that you feel very safe and how much you enjoy school and all the exciting things you are able to do
- You work hard in your lessons, are keen to do well and know how to make your work better.
- All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are very safe and well supported.
- You have lots of opportunities to keep active and healthy and you know well how to keep yourselves safe.
- You have an exciting curriculum, with visits and visitors that means that you develop good skills across a range of subjects.
- The adults who manage and run your school work hard to make sure you have the best opportunities.

Even though your school is outstanding, there are always a few things to do to help it become even more successful. These are the things for the school to work on.

- For the headteacher and teachers to plan activities that will help you understand more about the many people of different cultures that live in the United Kingdom.
- You are right to be proud of your school. Well done to you all. Please continue to work hard, behave well and do as much as you can for others.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen

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 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.