

Wittering Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110755
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	363769
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Matharu HMI

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	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Cartwright
Headteacher	Robert Laurie
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, a governor, and members of staff. Inspectors also talked informally with several parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including lesson plans, school development plans, records of teaching, the school's progress records and 170 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors looked at the progress being made by all pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- They investigated the progress being made in writing across the school.
- The team evaluated the quality of teaching and whether this is suitably challenging for pupils of all abilities was pursued.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a much smaller proportion than average from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few of these are new to speaking English. More than two thirds of pupils attending the school are from families serving in the armed forces, based nearby at RAF Wittering. Consequently, there is very high mobility of pupils throughout the school year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has Healthy Schools status. At the time of the inspection three teachers were on maternity leave. The headteacher is retiring later this year; his successor has recently been appointed.

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

Wittering is a good school where children flourish in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are highly positive about their school; they enjoy their work as evidenced by their good attendance and enthusiastic approach to learning. Pupils are welcoming, courteous and confident; their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate consideration for others, and their knowledge and understanding of global issues around the world are excellent. However, a number of pupils indicated at inspection that they would like to have further opportunities for leadership and play a more active role in improving their school.

The school's positive atmosphere arises from good relationships between adults and pupils. Parents and carers recognise this and are appreciative of the efforts made to ensure their children are happy and feel well supported. 'We are delighted our son is so happy at Wittering and has settled so well since joining the school' is a typical comment.

Consistently good teaching ensures that by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. This represents good progress given that most pupils arrive at the school with skills below those expected for their age. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully and use this information well to ensure that all groups of pupils are well provided for in lessons, make good progress and achieve well. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding, providing a solid foundation for the school's effective work in securing good academic and personal outcomes for pupils. The excellent quality of support, together with a range of suitable booster activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, results in outstanding progress for these pupils. However, occasionally the level of challenge for more-able pupils is less effective, particularly at Key Stage 1, in order to build on the excellent work achieved in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sometimes, pupils are not given enough independence to find out information and organise themselves in pairs or group activities.

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership with a clear vision of continuous improvement. Good morale is evident among the staff with strong teamwork contributing well to form a highly cohesive school community. Self-evaluation is accurate; this is a school that knows its strengths and areas for development well. The school is aware of the need to continue to improve pupils' writing. Strategies introduced so far are beginning to have an impact. However, there is still more to be done to encourage pupils to write regularly by providing a range of interesting opportunities for writing across the curriculum. There are examples of excellent feedback to pupils on how they might improve their writing but this remains variable across the school.

Standards and strengths in the school's work have been maintained since the last inspection through robust monitoring of both provision and pupils' progress. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing through:
 - ensuring that pupils have a range of interesting opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes across the curriculum
 - securing consistency in the marking of writing by identifying successful features and providing clear guidance for pupils on the next steps to improve their next piece of writing with appropriate follow-up.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - encouraging a greater variety of class activities, including opportunities for independent work
 - ensuring a consistently high level of challenge for the most-able pupils
 - exploring opportunities for teachers to observe best practice, both within the school and externally.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to have a voice in school and contribute to school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From below average starting points, pupils make good progress throughout school so that by the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. Results at Key Stage 1 indicate that progress slows a little in Key Stage 1 and accelerates again in Key Stage 2. In recent years, results have been better in mathematics than in English. However, after a dip in 2009, particularly in English, attainment at Key Stage 2 is on track to improve again in 2011, although pupils' writing remains a key focus for the school. Work in pupils' books, the school's assessment and progress information and evidence of lessons at inspection support this positive picture. Those children who are deemed to be vulnerable for a variety of reasons are very effectively and sensitively supported; consequently, they make outstanding progress.

Pupils demonstrate excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe from harm in a range of settings. They have great confidence that adults in the school are there to help them. They say that in the event of any concerns about safety, in or out of school, they know that the incident would be dealt with appropriately. Pupils understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, as reflected in the Healthy Schools status. They demonstrate good understanding of healthy eating and can explain why exercise is important. However, a number of pupils agree with their parents and carers that the importance of active lifestyles could be given more prominence in the curriculum for physical education, particularly through additional extra-curricular sporting activities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and show kindness and consideration towards each other. They are proud to be part of their school community, are active in raising funds for charities and participate well in events in school and the local community. Pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in a variety of activities that broaden their understanding of identity and diversity. Consequently, they are knowledgeable and

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compassionate when discussing global events and show great tolerance and respect for others.

Those with responsibility perform their roles well, as house captains and bronze ambassadors, particularly supporting younger pupils, for example as reading buddies. However, pupils informed inspectors they would like to play a greater role in school decision-making, whenever appropriate.

Pupils' above average basic skills, good attendance and their excellent ability to cooperate with each other result in good work-related skills for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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	1

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

How effective is the provision?

In lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a variety of teaching methods and resources, including information and communication technology, to motivate and interest pupils. They work effectively with teaching assistants; all adults ensure that pupils are expected and encouraged to do their best. Pupils enjoy pair and group challenges. These are well developed in some lessons but less prominent in others.

In most lessons, teachers use skilful, targeted questioning to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to think about their learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically. For example, in a highly successful Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils were fascinated by the artifacts their teacher had brought in from a local church that depicted The Ten

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Commandments. The children contemplated the language used and the issues arising from these. Their observations were encouraged; they reflected thoughtfully on whether killing anyone in war was a breach of The Commandments, which was sensitively and skillfully handled by their teacher. The class went on to re-write The Commandments in positive, modern language which might be more widely understood today. The lesson prompted a high level of challenge and engagement which typified the best learning seen at inspection. However, at times, the pace of learning drops and the level of challenge posed to more able pupils is reduced.

Teachers try to involve pupils' in understanding their targets and how they might achieve them. This is supported by visible targets on desks, marking and written comments in pupils' workbooks. The quality of teachers' marking is good when it provides pupils with a clear indication of how to improve, but occasionally this is variable. The curriculum is broad and balanced, incorporating a wide range of interesting and relevant activities and experiences. The 'Connecting Classrooms' project work which links the school with schools in Kenya and the Sudan, adds a rich international dimension to pupils' learning and significantly enhances their knowledge and understanding of life beyond the United Kingdom.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pupils are very well known as individuals. Intervention activities, including work with external agencies, are particularly effective for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with additional learning or pastoral needs. Pupils frequently move in and out of school, due to their families' work commitments at the neighbouring Royal Air Force base. Teachers take great care to ensure that new pupils settle in fully, and to smooth the way for pupils as they prepare to move to their next school. All school staff understand the school's context well and are tenacious in ensuring high quality induction and transition arrangements so that barriers to pupils' achievements are minimised.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is highly committed to the school. He provides purposeful and successful leadership to ensure that it has maintained its standing since the previous inspection. In doing this, he has created a strong staff team who share his vision for the school.

Self-evaluation is accurate and improvement plans centre on raising pupils' achievement. Monitoring arrangements ensure that the leadership team has a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders across the school share accountability for monitoring arrangements and contribute well to whole school improvement. There is

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real determination to use funding effectively in providing high-quality resources and equipment for pupils' use; the school is spacious and very well equipped in terms of both indoor facilities and attractive outdoor spaces.

The school knows the community it serves very well and pupils benefit from participation in a range of events locally. Also, the school continues to develop and extend its work with communities further afield through its international links and exchanges. The subsequent impact on the promotion of community cohesion beyond the immediate locality is outstanding.

Relationships with parents and carers are positive. A very large majority of parents and carers indicate through consultations that they are supportive of the school and particularly appreciative of the good discipline and quality of teaching.

Governors are highly committed, well informed about the school and closely involved in its work. They are knowledgeable and supportive ambassadors for the school, and offer robust challenge in order to influence decisions. The school securely meets the statutory requirements for the safeguarding of children. Procedures are robust and consistently applied. The headteacher acts rapidly and decisively on all issues relating to pupils' safety and well-being.

The school's attention to promoting equalities, 'closing the gaps' and working with a wide range of agencies to support pupils from vulnerable circumstances is exemplary. This ensures that potential barriers to learning are significantly reduced.

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	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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typical for their age. They gain ground quickly and securely, achieving excellent progress

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in all areas of their learning. This results in the vast majority of pupils working at or exceeding national expectations when they move into Year 1.

Vigorous and purposeful leadership ensures that provision is excellent in every respect. Strong team work is evident from all adults. The level of challenge provided is consistently high through carefully chosen and well planned activities. Children are encouraged to be active learners; they demonstrate high levels of independence and curiosity and enjoy choosing their own activities. Relationships are very strong; children respect each other and work well together. The Early Years Foundation Stage team has created a busy and well-organised environment that excites pupils and fires their love of learning.

A key factor is that there are very high expectations of what the children can achieve. Regular observations of what children can do take full account of their interests and learning needs. All aspects of pupils' progress and personal development are assessed and monitored carefully. Highly effective partnerships with parents and carers and other agencies support pupils' learning and development well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are very happy with the school's work and a higher than average percentage responded to the questionnaire. Several praised the quality of teaching, discipline and the school's strong leadership. A number commented on the excellent quality of support for individual needs and the good progress their children were making as a result. A significant number commented on their children's enjoyment of school.

A small number of parents and carers expressed the wish to have greater input in school decisions. Also, a few parents and carers feel that not enough is done to promote an active lifestyle and in particular, that physical education is not sufficiently well developed through extra-curricular activities. Inspection findings show that the curriculum is broad and balanced. The school has recently secured a grant to develop a variety of sporting activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wittering 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 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 285 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	106	62	60	35	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	59	68	40	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	92	54	71	42	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	56	67	39	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	99	58	69	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	87	51	72	42	9	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	39	84	49	16	9	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)	70	41	81	48	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	47	83	49	4	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	49	70	41	8	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	41	83	49	13	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	77	45	83	49	8	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	102	60	62	36	5	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wittering Primary School, Peterborough PE8 6AF

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. It was

- a pleasure to meet and talk with some of you. We were very pleased to observe your excellent behaviour and see how much you enjoy school life.

Many of you told us that Wittering is a good school overall and our findings support this view. It is led and managed well by your headteacher and the team of staff. The atmosphere in your school is really positive and you are courteous and confident. You are also very welcoming to visitors. You are very well cared for and you told us how adults help you if you have a problem. We noted how enthusiastic and hard working you are in your lessons. We were impressed with how much you know and understand about global issues affecting the world today. You told us that you are well taught and we agree with this. We saw lots of good lessons where there was a lovely atmosphere in your classes. Your teachers know you very well and try really hard to help you to learn well. They are careful in checking that you are on track to do your best, particularly those of you who find learning difficult. As a result, all of you are making good progress in your learning.

We listened carefully to what you told us and we have asked the school to do a few things to improve further. We have asked the school to:

- continue to improve writing and provide lots of interesting ideas and opportunities for you to write about different things.
- make sure that your work challenges you, especially those of you who find learning easy.
- involve you more regularly in improving your school by asking for your ideas on how things might be made better, as many of you have lots of ideas on this.

We hope you take advantage of the opportunities offered and wish you every success. Keep working hard and enjoying school!

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu

Her Majesty's Inspector

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