

Wallands Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114405
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	363820
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Scott
Headteacher	Debbie Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 28 lessons led by 19 different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 187 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The strength of pupils' progress in writing in Years 3 to 6.
- How well pupils with a statement of special educational needs progress in their learning.
- Whether the pace of learning is sufficiently brisk.
- The extent of the role that teachers with responsibilities play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

Wallands is a large and over-subscribed primary school that is sited in a residential area in Lewes. Most pupils live close to the school though an increasing number come from the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is about half the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, though the proportion having a statement of special educational needs is four times the national average. This is because the school includes a unit for pupils having speech and language difficulties that serves the western half of East Sussex.

The school provides breakfast and after-school care for pupils that are not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection report. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2009. The school has gained a number of awards including Artsmark (Gold) and International school status.

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

Wallands is a good school. Pupils achieve well and, by the time that they leave, standards are significantly above the national average. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support and this results in pupils thriving in an atmosphere where they feel safe, secure and valued. It is also reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and school and they have an outstanding understanding of the need to conduct a healthy lifestyle. Pupils know that their views are heard, that their contribution matters, and that they will be helped to succeed. Pupils with a statement of special education needs who attend the speech and language unit achieve outstandingly well and because provision in both unit classes is excellent, they enjoy school and their self esteem is high. Unit parent and carers are particularly pleased with the school. These are summarised by the parent who wrote, 'My son's development, both in terms of his speech and language and his confidence, has been phenomenal. He has only been at Wallands for nine months but he is a different child now.' There is a close and highly successful partnership between parents and carers and the school. This is reflected in the fact that almost all parents and carers said that they were happy with their children's experiences at the school and also by the very many complimentary comments made.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery class. They settle quickly and, because the staff are caring and maintain high levels of welfare, children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. Even so, overall progress is hampered because the outdoor space for the Nursery class is small and this limits the staff's opportunity to plan effectively for all the required areas of learning outdoors. Progress continues to be good in all other year groups. The school has rightly focused on strengthening pupils' attainment in writing because not enough pupils reach the higher level at the end of Year 2. However, as a result of the good range of improvement projects such as the new programme for the teaching of sounds and letters, progress has quickened especially across Years 3 to 6. In consequence, currently pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to attain standards that are well above average in both reading and writing. However, school data shows that not all pupils who are capable will achieve the higher level in writing at the end of Year 2.

The good quality teaching engages pupils' interest and fosters their eagerness to learn. Relationships are warm and encouraging and classrooms present with a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Although most teaching is good and is sometimes outstanding, it sometimes slips to satisfactory when the pace of learning is slowed. This occurs when teachers do not set sufficiently challenging tasks for the more able pupils. The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities, in and out of lessons, including a wide range of clubs that foster diverse interests with a particular focus on the arts. Many parents and carers made very positive comments, for example, regarding the recent

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musical evening which included almost 70 children in the orchestra playing ♦'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Special events such as this draw the whole community together.

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher is already much admired by pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers. She has built successfully on the many leadership and management strengths found at the time of the previous inspection. Above all, she has welded the whole staff team together to strive to further improve provision and achievement. Staff with responsibilities effectively monitor the work of the school and, as a result, accurate evaluation by staff at all levels ensures that a clear picture of strengths and development points is assured. Raised standards and initiatives to improve aspects of provision, when linked to clear educational direction and the fostering of effective teamwork, demonstrate the school's good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the pace of learning in all lessons matches that of the best
 - teachers ensuring that work is always sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils
 - raising the number of pupils who gain the higher level in writing at the end of Year 2.
- Extend the space for outdoor learning in the Nursery.

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

All groups of pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because their individual needs are effectively met. Pupils' enjoyment of learning was a prominent feature in the lessons seen during the inspection. Pupils talk excitedly about their work and are highly motivated. This was evident when a group of high ability Year 6 pupils were keen to show their writing following an excellent morning session in which they were focusing on persuasive writing. Standards in writing in Years 3 to 6 have improved considerably and now match those for reading, mathematics and science. Because progress is good in all year groups, by the time that they leave school standards are significantly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This marks a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average. A number of features have triggered these improvements. In writing for example, there has been a successful focus on strengthening pupils' use of letters and sounds. In addition, teachers ensure that a clear purpose for writing is provided and they successfully link writing tasks to many subjects across the curriculum. In Years 3 to 6, this has resulted in pupils becoming even more enthusiastic when asked to write longer pieces of work. In mathematics lessons observed, pupils achieved well because a good context for learning was provided and this ensured that pupils' levels of engagement and concentration was sustained well.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school which is the result of a caring staff who are responsive to pupils' concerns and the good quality personal and social education curriculum. For example, the recent focus on dealing with cyber-bullying and general e-safety supports the pupils' understanding of being safe. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility

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and they are pleased that the school council makes a contribution to improve the way the school works. For example, they recently prepared a a pupil charter for the toilets and also set school targets for issues that affect them all currently not running in corridors. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils develop into mature and responsible young people who have high self esteem. This, when linked to their above average basic skills, ensures that they are prepared well for the next stage in their education and for life beyond.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

The good quality teaching is an important factor in the pupils' progress. Planning is generally detailed and follows from an accurate analysis of tracking information about pupils' progress. This ensures that work is usually matched well to pupils' differing needs and imaginative and creative learning opportunities are provided. Lessons are lively and usually conducted at a good pace and, when set within the context of the strong relationships and good behaviour management by staff, this leads to the pupils achieving well. However, on occasion, teachers' expectations are too low particularly for the most able pupils and progress slows because they have to confirm what they already know before their learning is extended Teachers are particularly adept at providing work in small groups or pairs and this aids learning because the pupils enjoy working collaboratively. In a good Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, when pupils were preparing to write a balanced argument, the context set of whether animals should be kept in a zoo captured

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the pupils' interest. High quality inter-personal skills were evident as the pupils debated the issue in small groups and even those that were clearly against zoos managed to develop a cogent argument in favour of them!

Provision for the many pupils with special educational needs is outstanding whether they are in the unit or being taught alongside their classmates. Support from teaching assistants is valuable and significantly aids these pupils' learning. Alongside their classmates, these pupils also benefit from a good quality curriculum. They thoroughly enjoy the 'learning journey' approach that links many subjects within a topic. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were working out the area and perimeter of rectangular shapes and the teacher cleverly used the shape of tombs and chambers in a pyramid as they are currently studying the Egyptians. The curriculum is also strengthened by the strong emphasis that is made on ensuring that provision for music and the arts is good. This is demonstrated by the school gaining the gold award of the Artsmark. In addition, the rich range of after-school activities are organised well by the extended school co-ordinator and the very high take-up of the activities demonstrate the pupils' enthusiasm. These improvements in the quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection have strengthened provision considerably though there is now a need to embed the relatively recent developments across the whole school.

Pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Those who are experiencing difficulties in their lives, or who are having a difficult day are supported very sympathetically. The school also ensures that counselling services are available for pupils that need them and learning mentors contribute well to the excellent pastoral support given.

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 very well-informed and determined leadership of the headteacher is complemented by an effective senior leadership group. She is passionate about ensuring that all pupils have the best possible opportunity to succeed both in school and in the world beyond. This results in good levels of equal opportunities.

There has been a relentless pursuit of further improvements since the last inspection. These have been carefully considered, strategically planned and then energetically implemented which has led to a lifting of standards. Teachers with responsibilities make a good contribution to the monitoring and evaluation procedures even though many are newly in post following a review of leadership roles. They are adept at identifying strengths and areas where support or training is needed. For example, to further improve the quality of provision, a good programme to coach teachers and teaching assistants has

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been developed. The school provides a cohesive community. Pupils' are given good opportunities to study communities globally and has led to the school gaining the prestigious International Schools Award. Links with the local community are numerous and strong though opportunities for pupils to learn about contrasting communities in the United Kingdom are less well developed.

Governance is good. Governors take a keen interest in the life and work of the school and because they check provision for themselves and are provided with comprehensive information about progress and standards, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and development needs. This enables them to provide support and sensitive challenge. Governors ensure that health and safety regulations are met and there are effective child protection arrangements in place, including effective safeguarding policies and staff training. There are also effective vetting procedures to ensure that all staff are suitable to work in school.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a bright and busy atmosphere in the Nursery and both Reception classes and this means that children enjoy their learning. Children settle well because there are good induction arrangements which mean that they soon learn the routines of the classrooms. Their confidence is aided by the caring nature of the staff who listen carefully to them and ensure that activities are interesting and invariably linked to the current learning theme. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are as expected. They make good progress because the provision of activities and opportunities is good. However, even though the outdoor learning area for the Nursery has been developed since the previous inspection, children's progress is hampered by the limited space that is available. Staff ensure that there is a good balance between activities that the children choose for

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themselves and also those directed by the staff. They thrive on challenge such as in a good sounds and letters session in a Reception class where the children delighted in using newly learned words to write simple sentences. The staff know the children well and take the time to hear their thoughts and concerns and those of their parents or carers. As a result there are excellent relationships and children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and staff work closely as a team. Both the Nursery and Reception staff plan effectively to meet the needs of individual children. However, there are some missed opportunities to link planning across the classes to further develop children's continuity in learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

Parents and carers are overwhelming in their support for the school. Of the 187 replies to the questionnaires received, only one parent or carer said that they were not happy with what the school offers or that their child does not enjoy school. Many parents and carers made highly positive comments about the inclusive nature of the school, how their children enjoy school and the success of the school in nurturing their children's latent talents. Many others made positive comments about how well the headteacher leads and manages the school. Many parents and carers of pupils in the two unit classes were particularly pleased about how much their children enjoy school and learning. A number of these parents commented on how they had failed in their previous school which had left their children with negative attitudes towards school and learning. They said that this had turned round rapidly as the staff and children of Wallands had welcomed and embraced them into their community.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wallands Community 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 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 470 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	134	72	49	26	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	140	75	47	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	101	54	81	43	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	117	63	64	34	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	122	65	65	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	101	54	80	43	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	113	60	74	40	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)	119	64	57	30	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	108	58	72	39	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	104	56	78	42	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	56	76	41	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	134	72	47	25	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	154	82	32	17	1	1	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wallands Community Primary School, Lewes ♦ BN7 1PU

I am writing to thank you for your help when we came to visit your school and also to tell you what we found. We enjoyed our visit and we were pleased to see how you enjoy school. Many of your parents and carers said how much they enjoyed your performance of 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' and we were sorry not to have seen it!

Yours is a good school, and you are helped to learn well because the adults look after you well and their teaching is good. We were impressed with how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good and you have an outstanding understanding about being healthy and you feel safe in school. We think that your headteacher is doing an excellent job and she is helped by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want you always to do as well as you can. Your parents and carers said how much they value what the school provides for you and they work very closely with the staff for your benefit. ♦♦

Even in a good school like yours, there are things that can be improved. We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to make lessons even better by ensuring that there are always good challenges in the work for those of you that find learning easier. We have also asked that more pupils in Year 2 reach level 3 in writing. Finally, we want the outdoor learning space in the Nursery to be made bigger so that the adults can plan for more activities to take place outside. ♦

We really enjoyed our time at your school. Thank you for taking time to talk to us. We hope that you continue to find your time in school enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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