



Wootton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121875
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292248
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Farm Close Road
School category	Community		Wootton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Northampton NN4 6HJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 761679
Number on roll (school)	315	Fax number	01604 660832
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Theresa Costello
		Headteacher	Lorraine Schofield
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006	Inspection number 292248
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wootton Primary School is larger than most primary schools. All but a few pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is below average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and effective school. Good leadership and management accurately identified weaknesses in some of the older pupils' work and took prompt action that has resulted in improved standards and achievement. The current priorities in the school improvement plan are securely founded on an analysis of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. The school has moved on since the previous inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

The children currently enter Reception with standards that are just below those expected in aspects of English and mathematics. They receive a satisfactory start to school and experience a range of interesting and enjoyable activities. However, too little challenge is provided in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Consequently, while the children make satisfactory progress, they could do more. Progress picks up in Years 1 and 2 and by the time pupils start Year 3 standards are broadly average. This good rate of progress is maintained so that by the end of Year 6 standards are higher than the national average.

Good teaching is a key factor in pupils' success. The good lesson planning, and the use of setting, promotes purposeful and challenging tasks for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The records to track each pupil's progress in English and mathematics are good because they give teachers reliable information upon which to base each pupil's learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school has high expectations of behaviour, and the majority of pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils enjoy school, and the higher than average attendance shows that they are keen to come. The good progress that pupils are now making in literacy and numeracy illustrates that the school is preparing them well for their future economic well-being. All pupils are well cared for, and for example, pupils with learning difficulties are given thoughtful and sympathetic support which contributes to their good achievement.

The curriculum is good, with the school placing much emphasis on key skills. Staff are currently making good use of pupils' own interests to make the curriculum more relevant to them. However, limited use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop work in other subjects. Careful allowance is made for making pupils aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils report that they enjoy the wide range of visits and musical and sporting activities that the school provides. Parents also appreciate all the school has to offer.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide children in Reception with more challenging tasks in literacy and numeracy, so that they can achieve more.
- Give pupils more opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children's skills on entering Reception are just below those expected. During their time in Reception the children make good gains in their personal skills through well structured play and clear routines. They also improve their physical skills as a result of the wide range of resources available. However, the work in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is often not demanding enough for them, and as a result their achievement is only satisfactory. By the end of the Reception Year standards are still just below national expectations in these areas.

Through Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well, and by the end of Year 2 they have reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also now achieve well in Years 3 to 6, and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 in 2006 improved significantly on the previous year, especially in English. The school accurately identified weaknesses, particularly in writing, and through the careful addressing of these issues, the school ensured that pupils were able to achieve well and to reach above average standards. Pupils now successfully achieve, and often exceed, their challenging targets, with boys and girls performing equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning and most have sensible attitudes to their work. They are courteous and polite, and the quality of relationships is good. Pupils clearly feel safe in school, and they say that 'bullying does not happen often, and if it does the teachers sort it out'.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. In school the pupil council has helped initiate improvements, for example to toilets and playground facilities. The school is involved in the local community, and for instance, pupils from Years 1 and 2 were a great hit when they performed 'The Ugly Bug Ball' for local residents at the community centre!

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives. For example, they recognise the need to eat fruit, and to take regular exercise. Their knowledge of the wider world is extended through links with schools in Sri Lanka.

The school's successful development of pupils' personal skills, as well as the achievement of high standards in literacy and numeracy, prepares them well for their next stage of education, as well as for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan activities that encourage pupils to think about what they are doing, and this has a positive impact on promoting good learning. As one pupil said, 'Ideas keep popping out of my head!' Most lessons are lively and move at a brisk pace so that pupils are kept busy. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils are confident in seeking help. Pupils respond well to their teachers, although very occasionally a small number find it hard to concentrate and become a little restless and inattentive. However, expectations are high and behaviour is managed well. Teaching is satisfactory in the Reception Year. Here, tasks are not always demanding enough and this results in the more capable children 'treading water' rather than making progress and expanding their understanding.

The teachers review pupils' progress carefully and evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons well, often involving pupils in this process. Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly effective in making sure that those who need individual guidance are well supported. For instance, the help provided for pupils whose first language is not English ensures that they achieve as well as others in their classes. The practice of setting class and group targets in literacy and numeracy, and marking pupils' work against them, is productive in raising achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum underpins the teaching and learning. The approach to promoting thinking skills engages pupils actively in their learning. Teachers plan effectively and make relevant links between different subjects. As a result, pupils find the curriculum interesting and remain well motivated. Good use is made of computers in the computer suite, but opportunities are often missed to use computers and interactive whiteboards in the classrooms to further enhance the work in different subjects.

There is good emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development, health and safety. A wide variety of clubs effectively contribute to the pupils' enjoyment of school. Many visits, including residential trips for all pupils in Years 3 to 6, to such places as the Isle of Wight, and a variety of visitors, for instance those involved with the 'Roman Day', enhance what is provided for the pupils. Links with local colleges, and activities including learning Spanish, show pupils what is on offer beyond the school, and this raises their aspirations. Strong links with a range of organisations such as the Church, sports clubs and businesses, provide positive experiences for pupils, with, for example, coaches from local sports teams providing regular training sessions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils and parents confirm that this is a very caring school. Staff ensure the safety of the pupils, and risk assessments and other checks are carried out regularly. They ensure that pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Staff keep a careful lookout for any pupils who might be anxious or distressed. The good pastoral care, support and guidance pupils receive impacts very positively on their personal development. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 monitor pupils' academic progress very carefully, and use the information gathered to set them challenging targets in English and mathematics. Teachers discuss this information with pupils regularly, to help them understand what their targets are, and what they need to do to reach them. This good practice does not yet extend to the Reception Year where, although much information is collected, it is not always used to provide the children with adequate challenge in their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads with enthusiasm and skill, and is supported effectively by members of the senior leadership team and the governing body. There is good communication and teamwork, together with a clear and shared focus on improvement.

Through careful self-evaluation, senior leaders have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they recognised that improvements were needed in some aspects of teaching in Years 3 and 4, and that improvement was needed in the standards being attained by pupils in Year 6. Effective action was taken, with the result that both issues have been successfully addressed. The school has reviewed the progress of children in the Reception class, and identified that more needs to be offered to the higher attaining children to help improve their achievement. The current school development plan shows clearly how the school intends to tackle this issue, through ensuring more challenging work for the children.

Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have been active in closely monitoring the work in their subjects. This has allowed them to identify weaknesses in provision, and successfully contribute to improvements in standards and achievement. Subject leaders for other subjects have had more limited opportunities to monitor work in their subjects, and thus are not yet in such a good position to help develop their subjects further.

The school regularly obtains the views of both pupils and parents, and these are taken into account during policy reviews, such as those relating to school uniform and class reorganisation.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and I know that one of my colleagues particularly enjoyed speaking with the School Council. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school, what we think is good and what we think needs to be made better.

Here are some of the highlights

- You are in a good school, with a good staff, and you make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Nearly all of you behave well and help to make the school a happy place.
- You are sensible about making decisions on how to improve your school.
- You really enjoy the different clubs and outings that the school provides.
- Your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants care about you and look after you.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and to take exercise.

We have also found a small number of things to help make the school better. This means that we have asked the school to:

- Provide children in Reception with harder work in literacy and numeracy, so that you can all do as well as you can.
- Provide all pupils with more opportunities to use computers in your classrooms.

We wish you all good luck for the future.