

Welford Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121997
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292286
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	119
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gordon Ball
Headteacher	Michelle Pye
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	West Street Welford Northampton NN6 6HU
Telephone number	01858 575431
Fax number	01858 575431

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school admits pupils from Welford and surrounding villages. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2006, following a period when there was an acting headteacher. Pupils' attainment on entry is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The provision is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards except in writing which are lower. This is because teachers expect too little of pupils' writing in subjects such as science, history and geography which is often at a much lower standard than that in English lessons. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers are good at making learning fun for pupils by using interesting methods and resources. In particular, they make good use of computers for their teaching and pupils find the large whiteboards fascinating. The teaching in the Reception class is good and children make good progress in all areas of their development.

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe because of the good care, support and guidance provided by all adults. They attend regularly and their personal development and well-being are good. They behave well because that is what is expected. They look after one another and make good friends. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and talk knowledgeably about the importance of eating the right foods. The school has good partnerships with specialists who provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or health problems.

Pupils value the good well-planned curriculum that gives them interesting work and a good range of popular clubs after school. Teachers work hard at planning work at the right level for the different ages in the class and are generally successful. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and gives pupils many worthwhile opportunities to discuss their feelings and learn about relationships.

The headteacher has made a good start, and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher quickly gained a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has already made improvements in the quality of teachers' planning and assessment. These changes have been made at a realistic pace and the staff work well as a team. The school recognises that the next priority is to get subject leaders more involved in monitoring their areas of responsibility to ensure that pupils are making the best possible progress. Nearly all parents are pleased with the way the school is led, and one letter, which summed up the views of many, read: 'There have been many apparently minor changes made aimed at improving children's school experience that have made a noticeable and positive effect'.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in all subjects
- develop the role of subject leaders so that they have more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average, overall, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Children in the Reception make a good start to school and achieve well. They do particularly well in their

speaking, reading and mathematical skills and the vast majority of children meet the expected goals in all areas by the end of the Reception Year.

Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are above average in reading, average in mathematics but below average in writing. These findings represent satisfactory progress from their starting points, although few pupils develop their writing skills well enough. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily and the standards they reach at the end of Year 6 are close to the national average in English, mathematics and science, although there are some weaknesses in writing. This was also the case in the previous inspection. In English lessons, pupils write some good poems and stories that show lively imagination but when they write in other subjects, they make careless mistakes with punctuation and forget to join their letters. Staffing difficulties have contributed to a fall in standards since 2004 and 2005 when they were above average. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and many greatly improve their reading skills because of the good support they get in class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development of pupils starts in the Reception class where they soon learn how to take care of themselves and work confidently on their own. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy lessons and work hard to improve their skills. They concentrate well in lessons although, when the teacher talks for too long, some pupils lose interest and chatter to those around them. Attendance is good. They like being part of a small school because, as one pupil put it, 'we know everybody and we look after each other'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. During lessons, pupils think deeply about issues such as poverty, and write sensitive poems about things that are important to them. One pupil wrote:

Happiness is a pink spring flower. It reminds me of my mum surprising me.

Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong that is enhanced further by their helping to establish class and school rules. As a result, behaviour in class and around the school is good. They have a good cultural awareness and learn much from the school's strong links with a school in The Gambia. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being by learning about the jobs people do, working in teams and developing good ICT skills. They make a good contribution to the community by enthusiastic involvement in the school council and writing features for a local newspaper.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Many pupils say that the best thing about school is the lessons because teachers work hard at making lessons fun. They make effective use of whiteboards attached to computers, and pupils delight in 'dragging' shapes around the screen and working out complicated sums. Teachers provide a good balance of class teaching, small group work with the support of skilled teaching assistants and opportunities for pupils to work independently. Sometimes, however, the work with the whole class goes on too long and pupils start to lose interest. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, but they sometimes ask too little of their writing in subjects such

as science and history and this helps to explain why standards in writing lag behind those in other aspects of English. The teaching and learning of children in the Reception class is good. Lessons provide challenging and exciting tasks for children and they enjoy learning. Throughout the school, teachers' regular assessments of pupils are thorough and provide pupils with a clear picture of their levels of attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well to provide an interesting range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils. The planning takes good account of the different ages and abilities in the class so that all pupils have challenging but achievable work. However, the school recognises the need to link subjects like English, history, geography and science together more to give pupils more opportunities to improve their writing skills. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is organised very well to give children a good balance of academic work and less structured activities to develop their independence. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. They have challenging but achievable targets and they make steady progress towards them. The personal, social and health education provision is good and teaches pupils much about keeping safe and living healthy lives. The curriculum is enhanced by good opportunities for pupils to work alongside other schools in technology projects, visits to museums and residential trips. The many clubs after school extend the curriculum and are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support has a strong impact on the personal development of pupils. Pupils are made to feel safe and they feel confident to seek help from adults when they have worries. There are robust systems in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils, and parents are quick to say how well their children are cared for. Academic guidance is satisfactory, and pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, the systems to track pupils' progress are only just being developed and, as yet, provide only sketchy information about pupils' progress over time. The school has good links with other professionals to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The marking of pupils' work provides valuable guidance to help them improve, and they say how much they value teachers' comments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Upon her appointment in September 2006, the headteacher immediately employed good self-evaluation procedures and continues to juggle the roles of leader and class teacher successfully. Already, the quality of teachers' planning has improved and new assessment systems have been put in place. Teachers are starting to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects but the quality of this writing is not always good enough. These developments have taken place at a sensible pace and staff are working well as a team. The school has recognised the need to develop the role of subject coordinators, who provide adequate support to other staff but do not monitor their areas of responsibility with sufficient rigour to raise standards further. The school has established good partnerships with other schools and local businesses that enhance the provision for ICT, design and technology and physical education and help prepare pupils well for the future.

The school manages its finances very well and makes the most of all funds available. Despite the high turnover of staff and absences through illness, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and is satisfactorily placed to improve further. A typical view from parents was, 'I am hopeful and positive about the school's and my children's future'.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school enthusiastically and have a sound awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

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?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Welford Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed School, Welford, NN6 6HU.

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school recently. Those who were kind enough to talk to me told me a lot about your school. You clearly like being part of a small school where you all know each other so well. I enjoyed watching you work and play and I was very impressed with the musicians in the hall. Your school is satisfactory, which means it does most things right but has some things it could do even better.

What I found out about your school:

- You develop your personal skills well. Your behaviour is good and you take good care of each other. You know a lot about how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- Your work is of a similar standard to that of most schools, although you could do better in your writing. You make satisfactory progress.
- The teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are good at making lessons enjoyable for you and they make sure that they set work at the right level for you.
- The activities planned for you are interesting, and there are plenty of clubs after school that you enjoy.
- You are well cared for by adults who do all they can to keep you safe.
- The leadership is satisfactory. Your new headteacher has made a good start and knows how to improve things.

What the school needs to do now:

- Make sure that your writing is the best you can do. Your job is to try your hardest to write as well in all subjects as you do in English lessons.
- Get the leaders in charge of subjects to make better checks on your progress as you move through the school.

Best wishes for the future,

Terry Elston Lead Inspector