

Wheatfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131705
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	293821
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Janet Simms

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 on roll	
School	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Hilliam
Headteacher	Christine Dursley
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001
School address	Wheatfield Drive Bradley Stoke Bristol BS32 9DB
Telephone number	01454 868610
Fax number	01454 868611

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a relatively advantaged area to the north of Bristol. Few families claim free school meals. Although numbers are rising, fewer pupils than average speak languages other than English or come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wheatfield is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. These include pupils' exceptional personal development which comes about through outstanding care, guidance and support about which the school judges itself modestly. Pupils settle quickly and are happy, confident representatives of their school. Parents value these strengths highly and are very supportive of the school's provision.

Recent improvements in the systems used to check how well pupils are achieving, as well as in the quality of teaching, have led to pupils in Years 1 and 2 reaching higher standards than previously, particularly in English, where higher attaining pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Circumstances beyond the school's control adversely affected Year 2 pupils' achievement in the first term this year, but they have now settled well and abler pupils have now caught up with where they should be. Year 6 pupils, who were average when they entered Year 3, are now above average and those in other years are doing well. Although this is improving, teachers do not always plan lessons to provide enough challenge for abler pupils. Expectations of independent or group research work, for example, are limited.

Teaching and learning are good. Strong leadership and management have had a positive impact on improving the skills of inexperienced staff. Lengthy, planned staff absences have been managed skilfully to minimise the impact on learning. Teachers are very effectively supported by a strong team of teaching assistants who are instrumental in providing the support which ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well. A good, rich curriculum provides a wealth of opportunity for pupils to further their academic and personal development through lessons and visits. These contribute significantly to preparing pupils for their future, for instance through very good cooperation and teamwork and participation in an interesting range of sports.

The outstanding care, guidance and support includes significantly improved academic guidance which includes good marking and the setting of very focused targets for pupils' improvement. Staff make sure that pupils understand these targets well, so most know what they need to do to improve and can discuss this sensibly.

Good leadership and governance through this fairly new school's initial years have led to the strong position in which it now finds itself. Partnerships, including those with parents, are robust. The school uses these imaginatively to analyse and understand its strengths and weaknesses and its view of itself is honest and accurate. A strong leadership team, refreshingly open to ideas about how to improve the school, is developing successfully. While there is still some way to go to ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve better, the wide range of improvements since the last inspection shows good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 1 in English; in particular, ensure that teachers plan all lessons to cater more closely for the needs of all pupils and to challenge abler pupils to achieve their potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good across the school. Progress had been satisfactory to Year 2, but has improved in the last six months. Progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. Children's standards on entry to Reception have declined lately and are now broadly similar to those found nationally. Writing, communication and social skills are weaker and mathematics especially strong.

In the 2006 national tests, Year 2 pupils' standards were average overall, with very few reaching high levels in reading or writing. Boys were above average for boys, and girls below average for girls. Current Year 2 pupils are now making good progress, although there is room for more able pupils to improve further. In the 2006 national tests, Year 6 pupils did well in English and standards were above average overall, matching the potential they showed at Year 2. Boys did particularly well and achieved better than girls. There are now no discernable differences in boys' and girls' achievement and standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties and those with English as an additional language do well throughout the school because of good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils get on very well together. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel valued, knowing that adults have their best interests at heart. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils concentrate well on their tasks. They enjoy school very much and are keen to learn. Consequently, the attendance rate is above average. As one parent commented, 'My son loves it here. He has lots of friends and misses school during holidays.'

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. They work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a very well developed sense of fair play. They respond very positively when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council, or as buddies for those who need extra support at break times. Pupils show outstanding initiative, for example Year 6 pupils have organised and helped to lead sports days for younger pupils and have successfully helped to select new staff.

Pupils are very safety conscious and are greatly concerned for the welfare of others. They participate enthusiastically in a rich range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating. Pupils have very strong social and community awareness and are keen fund raisers for many good causes. Pupils' ability to work constructively with others and their good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) mean they are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is a key feature of the school's ongoing improvement. Detailed planning is underpinned by secure subject knowledge. Such features, together with clear introductory explanations at the start of lessons, result in pupils' enthusiastic participation in learning. Occasionally, though, too much time is spent giving overlong introductions leaving too little

time for active learning. Teachers mostly provide tasks well matched to pupils' stages of learning, but this is not always the case. At times they provide insufficient challenge for more able pupils, reducing the quality and extent of their learning.

Teachers use recently acquired interactive whiteboards well to provide effective visual stimuli to learning. In most instances their perceptive questioning, together with the frequent use of 'talk partners', helps pupils to clarify their thinking and consider their responses carefully. There are times, however, when questions are not sufficiently well focused, leaving some pupils confused. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English.

Thorough marking helps pupils understand what they should do to improve. Knowledge of their learning targets for literacy and numeracy, together with pupils' increasing involvement in evaluating their own progress, helps them to become more involved in their own learning and to achieve even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, although more detailed planning is needed to challenge the ablest pupils. In Reception, a well judged balance between teacher-directed activities and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play promote children's good learning well. In Years 1 to 6, the rich, well balanced curriculum stimulates pupils' interests. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils achieved well when working in groups to solve a fictional crime. This activity fostered interpersonal and reasoning skills particularly effectively.

The curriculum enhances pupils' personal development well through many enjoyable educational visits, visitors and clubs. After reflecting on a visit to Swindon railway museum as part of a World War II project, one pupil commented: 'It made you realise how hard it must have been to arrive somewhere new as an evacuee'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils feel safe, knowing that the staff will listen if they have any problems. 'The teachers are really kind and make sure you are happy', commented one pupil. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are extremely well looked after at school. Safeguarding procedures are robust, including very regular health and safety checks, and staff have benefited from first aid training. Thorough and effective procedures help children to settle in quickly whenever they start at the school and help those in Year 6 to prepare well for their next stage of education.

Pupils benefit from first-rate support and guidance for their personal development which reflects in their outstandingly positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour. Their academic support and guidance are very good, including assessment and marking which have improved significantly. Pupils know their next steps in learning, and are helped to evaluate their progress towards these targets. These factors are increasingly helping pupils to make good progress, although not quite as effectively for pupils with the potential for higher achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership. With good support from other senior leaders, she has overseen substantial improvements in teaching, the curriculum and procedures to monitor and track pupil performance. These, together with successful initiatives to improve reading and writing, have led to higher standards, better achievement and learners' exceptionally strong personal development. This has resulted in the eradication of past instances of underachievement for some pupils in Years 1 and 2. Senior leaders recognise what needs to be done to improve, for example the achievement of abler pupils.

The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement, and development planning is thorough. This enables challenging targets for improvements to be set which take into account properly the views of all associated with the school. Subject leaders are increasingly playing their full part in managing the subjects for which they are responsible.

Governors carry out their duties well. They play a full and effective part in strategic and financial planning, and are purposeful as 'critical friends' in challenging the school to do its best. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

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	2
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

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?	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

04 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wheatfield Primary School, Bradley Stoke, BS32 9DB

Thank you very much for welcoming all the inspectors to Wheatfield on 20–21 June. We learned a lot about the school and about your work while we were there, partly because you were very friendly and polite when you talked to us about it. I am writing to tell you the main things we found out. Your school is good, with well organised lessons which make it fun for you to learn. The way the school is organised and run is good too.

We were very pleased to see that you are making good progress. We know that you understand much better now how to improve your work, especially as you get older and you know your targets well. This is because teachers mark your work helpfully and talk with you about what your targets should be. It is really good that many of you could talk to us sensibly about how you can reach these.

We were extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour. This was clear to us when you were in school, but we know that when you go out, as Year 6 and Reception did on Thursday, you behave just as well; other people have told us so.

It is also really good that you get on so well together and work in very friendly teams and groups so often to do your work. This will help you a lot in future learning and work.

All the adults in the school take excellent care of you all and make sure you are safe and happy. This is partly what makes you such confident, sociable children.

You are learning well because teaching is good. Most of your lessons are interesting and staff make sure you concentrate well. Your headteacher and others make sure that your learning stays good and they do this well.

To make your school even better we have asked the teachers to help those of you who learn more quickly to reach even higher standards. It will be nearly the summer break when you get this letter and we hope you enjoy your holiday and your next year in school. We also hope that Year 6 enjoy their secondary schools.

Thank you again.

Janet Simms Lead inspector