

Welton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109071
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	309867
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Rundle 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 on roll	
School	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Green
Headteacher	Ruth Haines
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Radstock Road Midsomer Norton Radstock BA3 2AG
Telephone number	01761 413131
Fax number	01761 419645

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards of boys and higher attaining pupils, the consistency of teaching and learning, and the impact of actions taken by leaders since the last inspection. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils and scrutiny of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Welton is a smaller than average primary school. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language is very low. The school has an above average number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but a low number of students with a statement of special educational need. The number of students eligible for a free school meal is low, although there are increasingly more pupils from social and economic backgrounds of some disadvantage. The school has attained the Inclusion Quality Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, Activemark and Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Welton is a good school that places the needs of pupils firmly at the heart of everything it does. Staff and pupils all comment on the strong sense of community and teamwork that exists throughout the school. One pupil summed this up beautifully by saying 'Welton is like a team, everyone is included, everyone is special and everyone is treated the same.'

Pupils make good progress throughout the school from below average starting points. The rate of progress for the majority of pupils has improved in recent years, although this has yet to have a significant impact upon standards, which remain average by the end of Year 6. Improved standards in writing are particularly noteworthy, reflecting the school's focus since the last inspection. Pupils comment favourably on the new handwriting style, with several commenting that it has helped them write more quickly and re-read their own work more easily so they are motivated to write 'more interesting things'. School leaders have accurately identified that standards in mathematics require improvement. They have already put into place several measures this year to tackle this and have good plans to introduce further activities. The use of schemes such as 'Nippy Numbers' and intensive work in small groups is helping to improve the rate of pupils' progress and is helping them to catch up quickly on previous gaps in their mathematical knowledge and skills.

Boys have previously not attained as well as girls during Key Stage 2 but the school has worked hard to address this issue, putting into place a wide range of strategies. For example, the 'Write between the Posts' project with Bath Rugby Club has re-engaged and motivated boys to want to write. Other positive actions include changes to the resources used in literacy lessons, and even the role-play area in the Foundation Stage, to engage boys in learning from the earliest age. These are starting to impact successfully on boys making better progress.

Pupils experience an outstanding range of support, both academically and for their welfare. Pupils know their targets for improvement and next steps in their learning. School procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are robust, ensuring quick identification of any underachievement, and appropriate support is put into place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive outstanding support. They are fully included in lessons, have adapted activities or equipment to meet their needs and consequently make the same progress as others in the school. All pupils say they feel safe in school, are confident to approach any member of staff if they feel unhappy about anything and know that it will be dealt with quickly. One parent said, when their child was having difficulties, 'the school have helped us a great deal with support and information'.

Pupils are able to make good progress because of the quality and consistency of teaching, which is good. Following a period of staff changes, teaching is now stable and all are committed to using school initiatives such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Philosophy for Children (P4C). Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at using questioning techniques that challenge pupils' thinking, and consequently pupils are starting to work out solutions for themselves. This has resulted in the increased pace of learning. The majority of teachers intervene at just the right time to help pupils understand their work and know the next step they need to take. One parent reflected the widespread appreciation of this support in the comment, 'my child's achievement is way above good. She has increased in confidence, ability and verbal contribution.' Overall, teachers are skilled at planning work to meet the needs of different levels of ability; the interesting and stimulating range of work enthuses and engages

the vast majority of pupils. Occasionally, however, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in lessons and are capable of more. Classrooms and other areas in the school are exciting learning environments with excellent displays celebrating pupils' work.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; behaviour is exemplary and attendance is consistently above the national average. They say how much they enjoy coming to school because 'learning is made fun'. They have outstanding opportunities for personal development, including taking positions of responsibility, developing healthy lifestyles and supporting local and national charitable events. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them, particularly sport, music and the Welton after school club initiative (Waci). They are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Leadership at the school is good on all levels. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have set a strong strategic direction and vision, although all staff feel involved and their contributions are valued in setting the vision and drive for improving standards. The headteacher is ambitious to achieve more for this already good school; key priorities have been identified and actions are already in motion, showing good capacity to improve further. She is inspiring everyone with her focused and determined leadership. Governors play a full and active part in the school and display good understanding of the next priorities to take the school forward. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; one summarises what many others say in the comment, 'the school is well led, teachers are very approachable and I feel my children have achieved their best at the school. They wear their school shirt with pride'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their attitudes towards learning. They have good opportunities to develop their social skills through role-play activities where they learn to share, take turns well and think of how others may feel. A well-planned range of activities enables them to explore and make discoveries for themselves. For example, when learning about water, they use paint to simulate movement and discover how ice feels as it melts; they enjoy practising making letters and numbers with water and are fascinated by watching them out dry out in the sun. The outdoor play area is utilised well; a good range of large and small equipment is available to support physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils so they achieve their best.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Welton Primary School, Radstock BA3 2AG

I am writing to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and for talking to me when I came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what I found out about your school.

You are very lucky to go to such a good school where everyone is working to help you achieve your best. You told me how much you enjoy coming to school because learning and lessons are fun. Your teachers and teaching assistants ask you lots of questions that are helping you to think of solutions for yourselves, I hope that you continue to try as hard in lessons as when I saw you. You are starting to make much faster progress in your learning, and lots of you said how much more you enjoyed writing since you have been using the new writing style. Your teachers and I do, however, think that your standards in mathematics could be better. I also think some of you could be given tasks that are a bit more challenging in your lessons.

You were able to tell me how you used the smiley faces for assessments and what your next steps are in learning. Because the school track how well you are doing in lessons, they are able to identify those of you that may need specific help to get even better. You get an outstanding range of opportunities to support your progress, like 'Write between the Posts' and 'Nippy Numbers'. The school also gives you outstanding opportunities to take responsibility around the school and in the local community. You have a very good understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle, and a lot of you said how much you enjoyed the extra-curricular sport, music and especially the 'Waci'.

The headteacher, together with staff and governors, are determined that Welton will be an even better school in the future. So I hope that you continue to work hard and keep enjoying school.

Thank you once again for telling me so much about your school.

Judith Rundle Her Majesty's Inspector