

Waddesdon Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110376
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310276
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edward Conway
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Vicentijevic
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Baker Street Waddesdon Aylesbury HP18 0LQ
Telephone number	01296 651237
Fax number	01296 655959

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This village school is situated in the attractive village of Waddesdon. It serves the local community, the social and economic characteristics of which are mixed. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a very small number from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below that found nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status, Quality Mark, Active Mark, Swan Awards, Achievement Award, Investors in People, Bucks Healthy School Validation, Level 2 Sustainable Learning, and holder of level 3 Travel Plan.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Waddesdon Village School is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils achieve well academically. The headteacher's enthusiasm and energy for change has ensured considerable improvements since the last inspection. Parents hold very positive views of the school. Typical comments are, 'A lovely school environment where all the children are happy and well cared for', 'We feel extremely privileged to have such a good village school where our children can achieve their potential'. The school is highly inclusive. Teachers value the importance of each child, providing pupils with good care, support and guidance. This contributes to their outstanding personal development, which is reflected in their good behaviour and the considerate way in which they respect each other and the adults in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy and enjoy the 'wake and shake' exercises, which helps their concentration in lessons.

A good curriculum with a wide range of extra curricular activities, supports pupils' impressive personal development so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils are active and confident learners. Much of this success is due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who encourages innovation and constantly challenges and supports staff. She leads a very committed staff and has created a 'can do' culture.

Current standards are above average. Children enter Reception with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. Pupils progress well to reach above average standards in English and science by the end of Year 6. Standards are broadly average in mathematics, where in 2007, a relatively small proportion of Year 6 pupils reached the higher levels. Detailed evaluation has enabled the school to put measures in place, which include strengthening teaching, to focus sharply on increasing pupils' mathematical skills, particularly in problem solving. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating and standards in mathematics are climbing. Although the most recent assessment information shows that Year 6 pupils are largely on track to meet their challenging targets for mathematics, the school recognises that more work remains to be done to ensure that they are met. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others. This is because of the close attention and support they receive from staff, and the effective partnerships with outside agencies.

Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and respond very well to the good teaching they receive. They pay close attention in class and try hard to produce work of a good quality. Lessons consistently have a good pace and engage pupils effectively. Pupils enjoy school very much and this is reflected in their regular attendance. Effective arrangements to safeguard learners are in place. Health and safety procedures are given a high priority. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress now allows staff to set clear goals for sustainable academic achievement. Procedures to provide pupils with guidance tailored to their individual learning needs are developing. Pupils' individual targets need a sharper focus so that the higher academic expectations the school holds can be realised. Along with the relatively new leadership team, the headteacher coupled with good governance, has led developments very effectively. The strategies that are now in place give the school a good capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a strong start to school because of good teaching and an activity led curriculum which is well tailored to their needs. Parents frequently seek out the school because they know how well their children settle, and that they are very happy and are extremely well cared for. The good gains children make in their learning ensure standards are above expectations at the end of Reception, particularly in social and emotional development and language skills. Children eagerly co-operate when learning language skills through role-play, imagining, for example, they are running an optician's consulting room. Standards are not as high in mathematical development, where some more able children do not do as well as in literacy. Good leadership and management are ensuring standards are continuing to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen pupils' individual targets for learning so that both teachers and pupils have even higher expectations of what can be achieved.
- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly of more able pupils, by completing plans already underway.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress overall. By the end of Year 2, standards are a little above average. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English and science. In mathematics, standards achieved are average. Progress is satisfactory in mathematics. Recognising that more work remains to be done to improve this, the school is working hard to improve pupils' understanding of problem solving. Teachers' assessments in 2007 and current Year 6 pupils' work show that standards in mathematics are rising, following a decline in recent years. The school sets increasingly challenging targets to raise attainment and pupils are making good progress towards reaching them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school maturing into courteous and self-assured young people. Extremely healthy lifestyles are underpinned by enthusiastic participation in sport and adoption of healthy diets. The majority of parents support this by providing healthy lunchboxes. Pupils show a very good understanding of fire, road and Internet safety. They uphold the school rules, which they discuss and sign up to in each class. Pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality are all good and supported by the many parents who resist taking holidays in term time. The school council plays an effective part in developing the school, for example through participating in the appointment of the current headteacher and improving the school environment. Pupils are keen to act as eco-monitors, ensuring the school is energy friendly. Relationships are excellent. Pupils also act as friendship partners, where older pupils ensure younger ones are happy and safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding with, for example, pupils having a highly developed understanding of cultures and beliefs held in communities much different from their immediate surroundings. Not only are pupils extremely keen to represent the school in local community events but their enthusiastic links with a school in the Gambia illustrates their commitment to the much wider community.

Pupils' good progress in their basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), and their good collaboration, means they are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Central to the pupils' good progress in this school is the effective work of their teachers and teaching assistants. There is a tangible feeling of everyone working together as a tightly knit team. Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically. Across the school, pupils are motivated to develop as independent learners. A range of activities encourages them to think for themselves and to collaborate effectively in small groups. Lessons have good pace. ICT, including the use of whiteboards, involves pupils and stimulates learning. Many teachers use skilful questioning to enable pupils to think clearly. However, on a few occasions, some pupils are not challenged enough and work does not always extend those with higher ability sufficiently, particularly in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Enrichment of the curriculum is first class with a wide range of visits, visitors and additional activities, themed weeks all adding zest and enjoyment to learning. Special care is taken to ensure all pupils are included and get the most out of these activities. There are particular strengths in the curriculum for English, science, ICT, art, music and religious education. French is taught in Years 3 to 6. Consistently thorough planning takes good account of pupils' differing needs and abilities, especially in English and science, and contributes to pupils' good achievement. The school has rightly recognised some areas for further development in mathematics. Very good provision for pupils' personal and social educational includes topics on bullying, keeping safe and achieving personal goals, which impact strongly on pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel extremely safe and well cared for at all times because staff keep an eagle eye on their needs and know them as individuals. The school has very effective procedures for vetting staff, safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety. Staff effectively use the specialist support provided by outside agencies and deploy teaching assistants well to offer good support for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils new to the school are quickly helped to settle in and home visits are frequently used to establish a two-way partnership with parents.

Teachers make good use of assessment data and other information to track and identify pupils' learning needs. Focused marking helps pupils recognise how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The targets set for particular groups of pupils are good. However, the school is aware that some individual learning targets need to be sharpened to ensure all pupils are fully challenged.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created a strong learning environment in which the needs of the child are paramount. Staff share her passion for high quality education and care. They rightly speak very highly of her leadership and the way in which she involves them in all aspects of the school's work. Administrative staff are very conscientious and help the school to run smoothly as well as proactively, seeking external sources of funding for new initiatives. An example of this is the environmental area, which is being developed with support from nearby Waddesdon Manor. The school enjoys a positive reputation within the local community and good links with the adjacent secondary school. The school has a very accurate view of itself. Governors know the school well, are supportive and not afraid to provide challenge. There have been significant improvements in many areas since the previous inspection, although achievement in mathematics and sharper target setting remain important areas for development.

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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	2

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 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	2
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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

05 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waddesdon Village Primary School, Aylesbury, HP18 0LQ

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school. It was nice that so many of you came up to talk to us. We enjoyed our discussions with you. It is clear that you develop into very responsible and mature young people. In fact your personal development is outstanding! Many of you take a real interest in how the school runs and enjoy having different responsibilities to help make it a better place. When I went out at lunchtime there were some of the older children helping you to play well together. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do. Sharing the very exciting session on African Drumming with you was a bonus and we can see why so many of you enjoy school.

Yours is a good school for many reasons. You know how to stay healthy by eating the right food and by taking plenty of exercise. You make the most of the range of art, music and sport activities during and after school. You behave well and so you waste very little time in lessons. Many of you and your parents told us how well the adults take care of you and that you feel safe and happy here. You make good progress because you are well taught and work hard. Teachers plan interesting activities and give you plenty of help and encouragement.

The leaders and teachers have improved the school and are always trying to make it better. We think that you could make even better progress, particularly in mathematics, so you may find teachers asking you to think even harder at times, but I know you are up to the task. We have asked the teachers to provide you with sharper individual targets for your work. You can help by asking your teachers for more difficult work if you find it is too easy or if you finish it before most other people.

I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector