

Wallands Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114405
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311585
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Scott
Headteacher	B W Davies
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Gundreda Road Lewes BN7 1PU
Telephone number	01273 472776
Fax number	01273 471228

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than most other primary schools nationally. The majority of pupils are of White British background. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills broadly expected for four-year-olds. This is a recent change to previous children, who entered the school with skills below that expected. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is higher than the national average, due to the language unit attached to the school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

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 school. The school has introduced effective measures to promote good progress through good teaching and learning. Standards are average and rising. Pupils are given a good start to their education and children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This year, children entered the Nursery with levels of skills generally expected for their age. This is a change from previous years when pupils started school with levels of skills below that expected for their age. The school is committed to raising standards and has taken action to improve upon recent results, including the 'Big Write' initiative and additional classes to boost progress. The current Year 6, based on school-based assessments, is predicted to reach above average standards in 2008, representing good progress relative to their starting point on entry to the school. This was supported by evidence of work seen in lessons. Whilst there is evidence of good teaching throughout the school, this was not consistently the case in all lessons observed. Strengths in the quality of teaching include strong relationships, good subject knowledge and probing questions. However, in some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not consistently provided with enough challenge.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. This is a result of good behaviour and attitudes to learning, but also stems from the very good pastoral support that the school offers them. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and about the school. They enjoy coming to school. They know how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community, both locally and more widely. For example, they contribute to the life of the local community by inviting adults from a day centre into the school. Many pupils take part in the highly organised and much enjoyed extra curricular activities. They work well together in pairs and in teams and enjoy learning. One pupil said, 'There are a lot of people in this school and they all get on very well.' Year 6 pupils act as sports leaders and enthusiastically help the younger pupils to play different games during lunchtimes. The well trained Year 4 and Year 6 playground 'buddies' support the younger pupils at playtimes. This makes a positive contribution to playtimes being calm and pupils feeling involved. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to work together in pairs and teams, which contributes well to their social development.

Pupils are well cared for and child protection procedures are in place. Care, guidance and support are good because assessment procedures are well developed in English and mathematics, but pupils' progress is not sufficiently tracked in science. The curriculum is well structured but is not sufficiently embedded to allow pupils to reach good standards. The pupils attending the language unit benefit from well focused and targeted support and activities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good direction and has a clear vision for improvement which is shared by staff. However, there is more to do to ensure that the full impact of new structures and initiatives is fully effective to raise standards. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has identified the need to raise standards and develop the role of the subject leaders. Priorities for action, which stem from the process of self-evaluation, focus on the most significant issues for the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children meet the early learning goals, which, taking into account the different starting points for those in Nursery and Reception, represents good progress overall. Particular areas of strength are the provision for children's personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. Teaching is good with daily observations of children's progress effectively identifying where further work is required to build on previous learning. The effective curriculum helps children to learn through discovery and investigation. Learning is effectively prepared to follow a topic theme that includes a good balance of activities that are adult led and those that children choose for themselves. Although there is an outdoor area designated for both the Nursery and the Reception classes, it is not available continuously throughout the day and lacks specific large outdoor apparatus to provide daily planned experiences to improve coordination and physical skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor learning area for the Foundation Stage so that there are sufficient opportunities for full and appropriate use of the outdoor classroom.
- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards of pupils' work are improving. During the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and reach standards expected for their age. Standards of Reception children on entry to the school were below that expected. At the end of Year 6, standards are average, which, given their below average starting point, represents good progress. In 2006, standards dipped due to staffing difficulties at a time when there were planned changes to the timetable and curriculum. This has been addressed by increasing hours of learning, the staffing structure being secure and the introduction of learning checks and better links made between subjects. Inspection evidence indicates this is producing positive results with pupils making good progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good knowledge of pupils' current skills ensures good progress. Useful tools, such as the 'pyramid' prompts used in Year 6, help pupils to know how they can improve their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are well cared for and relationships are strong throughout the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of learning, especially in art, sport and practical science. Their good manners and behaviour contribute to the school's calm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other and respond positively to teachers' high expectations. One pupil commented, 'The teachers are nice and make lessons fun.' Pupils feel confident that adults will help them if they have problems, saying, 'Teachers make you feel safe.' Teachers value pupils highly and this contributes strongly to developing pupils' self-esteem and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. They have positive opinions about the regular physical education lessons and after-school sports clubs, together with the

exciting and well equipped outdoor areas available for all pupils. 'We do the right amount of everything to keep fit and happy,' said a Year 6 pupil. Pupils are thoroughly involved in the life of the community through sports links with other local schools and international links with pen pals in a Spanish school. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory because pupils' basic skills are broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Staff have successfully cultivated climates within classrooms that are conducive to learning. Lessons have clear learning objectives so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Typically, teachers check that pupils have achieved the intended outcomes. Teachers vary in their effectiveness to keep lessons moving at sufficient speed and, where pace slows, learning is less and pupils become less engaged. Although all teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils through a range of different activities, there are occasions where there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Consequently, for these pupils, learning is not always rapid and pupils do not improve their skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and relevant to the needs of pupils, offering a balanced approach to pupils' learning. Enrichment is good and with carefully selected visits, residential trips and secondary school links making pupils' experiences interesting. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for sensitively and carefully. Teachers make good links between subjects to enhance pupils' learning. The school does not have an ICT suite but provision for ICT is satisfactory and under development. Pupils learn to lead healthy lives and to adopt safe practices through a correctly-planned personal, social and health education programme. There is high participation in the outstanding extra-curricular activities. These develop pupils' physical, personal and social skills and add to their enjoyment of school. Children in the Foundation Stage do not move freely between the indoor and outdoor learning areas and there is limited space, particularly in the Nursery.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with well defined procedures to ensure that pupils' welfare is a priority. Staff know the pupils individually and, as a result, the pupils feel secure and cared for. As one child said, 'Teachers make you feel safe.' The school is sharpening its effective assessment and tracking processes and this is a focus for raising standards. Provision for academic guidance in science is under- developed and is not sufficient at present. The language unit provides highly effective and carefully planned support for pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school takes good care when pupils move from one Key Stage to the next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management has made effective use of a good range of new strategies to improve progress. These initiatives are now improving standards. Some of the strategies have been aimed at the whole school, for instance, effective use of school-based assessment to trigger additional programmes and interventions, such as additional mathematics support. Equality of opportunity is promoted keenly and the school has a highly inclusive ethos. Resources, including staff, are well deployed to ensure progress of pupils. Subject leaders have monitored their areas but need to raise standards through more frequent analysis of teaching and being more able and confident in suggesting improvements in teaching strategies for their subject. Assessment procedures have enabled the school to set challenging targets to raise standards. Governors know the school well and understand the priorities for its next stage of 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?	1
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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

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	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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wallands Community Primary School, Lewes, BN7 1PU

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We judge your school to be good and improving. It helps you make good progress in English, mathematics and science.

You told us how you enjoy your education because of the practical lessons and because of your teachers treating you fairly. We think you have a good awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy through eating fruit and exercising.

Your headteacher knows what to do to make your school better. I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things which will improve the school for you:

- Improve the outdoor learning area for the youngest children.
- Make sure you reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore Lead inspector

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Richard Blackmore
Lead inspector