

# Wolvercote Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123051
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314468
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Collins

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Lawrence Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anna Ballance
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	First Turn Wolvercote Oxford OX2 8AQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 558301
<b>Fax number</b>	01865 511737

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Three-quarters of the pupils of this average sized primary school are of a White British background. The proportion of pupils from different ethnic groups is average and the numbers within groups are small. Numbers of those whose first language is not English are well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark for physical education. It is currently working to become an Eco school. An after-school club is run by an approved outside agency. The school has completed its reorganisation from a first school to a primary school.

## 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, inclusive school with a strong sense of community. Many parents see the school as an important focus in the local community and overwhelmingly support its work, describing it as, 'A happy school where the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming'. In recent years the school has experienced a degree of staff turnover. Currently a more stable staff, improving quality of teaching and well-targeted support are enabling pupils to achieve well. This is resulting in a trend of rising standards and enhanced personal development and well-being for the great majority of pupils. Current standards by the time pupils leave school are broadly average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The school has addressed successfully the issues from the last inspection although there remains room for improvement in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school is given strong direction by the headteacher, ably supported by governors and senior staff who have a good view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. At present, however, the monitoring role of leaders in English, mathematics and science does not include the observation of teaching in their subject areas. Given strong leadership, the improving quality of teaching, rising standards and higher achievement, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Most pupils have responded well to teachers' raised expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning are now good. Behaviour is managed well and the great majority of pupils respond positively to the challenges of their teachers. Pupils demonstrate good levels of concentration and their improved behaviour contributes well to purposeful and productive lessons. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to develop a strong sense of right and wrong, and caring for others. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles and of being safe are additional strengths of the school. Through the school council, pupils are proud of the way they have contributed to the improvement in healthy lunches and the demonstration of new equipment at playtimes enables all to have a good regard for safety.

The excellent range of clubs and activities considerably enhances the good curriculum and give good support to pupils' personal development and well-being. Sporting activities, music, art and the after-school club also contribute strongly to pupils' well-being. Pupils are making increasingly effective use of literacy and numeracy skills alongside the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects.

A few parents expressed some reservations about aspects of the school's work but this was not supported by inspection evidence.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The provision for the youngest children is good. In both Nursery and Reception classes staff provide a welcoming and exciting environment, which stimulates children to learn through practical play. Good use is made of both indoor and outdoor environments. Children are enthusiastic and eager to develop independence and explore. Their social development is particularly good, evident in the ways in which toys and games are shared and children patiently take turns. They have good listening skills. Teaching is good. Staff capture pupils' interests by ensuring their planning provides good pace, timing and relevance in their planned activities. A good emphasis is placed on the development of early literacy and numeracy skills and this encourages children to develop an interest in books. Assessment procedures are good. A wide

range of strategies is used to provide evidence of progress and achievement, for example annotated photographs, which are shared with parents. There is a strong partnership to enable learning to be linked between home and school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing particularly by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Give greater responsibility to the role of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The 2007 test and assessment results were an improvement on those of 2006, and have continued the trend of rising standards over the past three years. Most children start school with the skills expected for their age. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach above average standards. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science. Standards in English overall are broadly average and have improved from 2006. Reading standards are above average but progress has been slower in writing. Overall pupils achieve well. Progress in reading, mathematics and science is good and pupils' good ICT skills are being used more effectively now in other subjects. This is due to a combination of improving teaching, well-targeted support for particular groups and the use of increasingly well-targeted assessment and tracking data. The good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and for those with statements of special educational need enables them to make equally good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being have some outstanding features. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, with the school's provision making a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils themselves talk about the themed Africa Week that has helped them to understand very well how other people 'live and think differently than us'. Similar themes around Art, and Health and Environment have secured a very good awareness of other cultures and a concern for the environment. They are proud of the school and its achievements, for example the Activemark award and the Healthy Schools status. The school council gives pupils responsibilities and enables them to make a good contribution to the life of the school. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say their teachers 'make learning fun and exciting'. Pupils behave well and consider the impact of their words and actions on others. They say bullying is rare because 'everybody is friends with somebody'. They are courteous and are taught to value each other's views, as seen to good effect in a lesson about friendship.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress because of good teaching. The headteacher's accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching identifies where and how it can improve. Because of actions taken, there are a number of aspects of the teaching that are consistently strong. Lessons are well planned with good opportunities for pupils to build on what they have learned before. Teachers

use questioning and discussion groups to encourage pupils to build up their speaking and listening skills, developing their confidence and self-esteem. Good pace, challenge and high expectations promote effective learning in many lessons. Less effective teaching involves over-long introductions, thus giving less time for pupils to contribute their ideas. Teaching assistants are employed effectively. Their support for pupils with learning difficulties and other well-targeted groups in mathematics and English enables them to make equally as good progress as their peers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is being developed creatively and making increasingly better use of literacy, numeracy and ICT across other subjects. This enables pupils to apply their skills and knowledge in subjects such as science, art, history and design and technology. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their vocabulary and improve sentence construction. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of all groups of pupils and there are many practical opportunities for them to investigate independently and to work in small and large groups. This contributes well to their social development. Pupils' personal development is also promoted well through teaching about relationships. A very good range of well-attended clubs enriches the curriculum and contributes well to personal development. Visits and visitors contribute to the range of learning opportunities, enabling pupils to benefit from learning about the lives and beliefs of others. This helps them to understand the importance of contributing to community life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care guidance and support for pupils. Teachers' good knowledge of pupils and their families enables them to meet specific needs well, for example, provision for bereavement counselling. Academic guidance is good. Pupils have personal targets to meet. Monitoring of progress is rigorous and ensures that tracking reflects precisely the rates of progress made by individuals and groups. Marking is satisfactory but does not consistently support pupils in understanding how to improve their work. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to take part in supporting learning. Child protection and health and safety procedures are rigorous. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and know who to go to if they have a problem. There are close links with other local schools and transfer arrangements are good.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Since reorganisation, the school has benefited from the strong leadership and management of the headteacher, described by one parent as 'a breath of fresh air'. She has been ably supported by governors and senior staff. Governors provide good support to the work of the school and hold it to account through challenging its decisions. After the recent reorganization, staffing is more stable and this has led to better teaching with a stronger focus on raising standards and achievement. The school is effective in evaluating its own performance and, for example, current targets in its development plan are addressing issues already identified over writing and marking. At the same time, there is room for improvement. Subject leaders in English,

mathematics and science are still developing their roles. At present, this does not include the observation of teaching, which is undertaken by senior staff.

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## 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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

04 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wolvercote Primary School, Oxford, OX2 8AQ

Thank you for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. The school council and others told us how much you enjoy your lessons because teachers make learning fun. We were very impressed by your good behaviour both in classes and on the playground.

Here are some of the things we think your school does well.

- You are doing much better in reading, mathematics and science than you did before.
- The headteacher and other teachers and governors are doing a good job in running the school.
- You told us you feel safe and we agree that the school takes good care of you.
- We agree with you that you have good teachers.

These are the things we think the school could do better.

- Help to improve your writing by helping you to write better sentences using a wider range of vocabulary.
- Let the subject leaders in English, mathematics and science find out even more about how well you are doing by watching more lessons.

We think these will help your school to get even better. You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your very best. If you don't understand anything, ask your teachers; I'm sure they will help.

Good luck to you all in the future.

John Collins

Lead Inspector