

Welford and Wickham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109984
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325072
Inspection date	9 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	65
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Hunt
Headteacher	Mrs Florence Rostron
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Welford Road Wickham Newbury RG20 8HL
Telephone number	01488 608 306

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	9 March 2009
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Fax number

01488 608 306

Age group 4-11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- What are the key features that lead to such exceptionally high standards at the end of Year 2?
- How well are the current Year 6 pupils achieving, and are they on course to continue exceptionally high standards?
- How good is the quality of pupils' learning?
- How well do subject leaders contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, an evaluation of a sample of their work, and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 41 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the 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

Welford and Wickham Church of England is a very small village primary school that is heavily oversubscribed. Pupils come from the two villages, and increasingly also from other villages in the surrounding area. The Early Years Foundation Stage children in the Reception share a class with Year 1 pupils.

Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, and pupils' additional needs often relate to them having speech, language and communication difficulties. Among others, the school has gained the Artsmark Gold award and the sports Activemark. The school's 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: 1

Welford and Wickham is an outstanding school. Pupils make excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. By the end of Years 2, standards of work are exceptionally high and this very high level is maintained through to the end of Year 6. The school has what one pupil called 'a big family' atmosphere; this enables pupils to thrive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and its leadership. Many wrote highly positive comments about their children's development that are typified by the remark, 'My daughter is eager to learn, and thrives. I can't think of a happier environment in which to learn.'

Pupils of all abilities achieve outstandingly well. This is because the quality of lessons, the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are all very impressive and outstanding in quality. Teaching is particularly strong and relationships are excellent, and as a result, pupils enjoy learning, are happy at school and thrive. Teachers' planning is exemplary in meeting the needs of the wide range of pupils, and lessons are characterised by exciting activities that capture their interest. Assessments are used well to ensure that work is carefully matched to pupils' learning needs. All pupils are treated as individuals, and, as one erudite Year 6 girl rightly said, 'Everyone treats everyone exactly as they would like to be treated.' These factors ensure that pupils' learning is exemplary.

There is a strong sense of community cohesion, with excellent partnerships between the school and parents, the two villages, and churches and other schools within the local and wider communities. Pupils behave in a respectful way to others and they are polite, helpful and courteous, which is outstanding. They have highly positive attitudes to school and learning and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils become thoughtful, mature and confident young people.

The new headteacher is pivotal to the school's improvement and success. Her leadership is outstanding and she has built effectively on the many strengths found in the previous inspection. Her determination and commitment to improvement is shared by staff and governors, and all the adults work closely together; as a result, staff morale is high.

Teachers with subject responsibilities carry them out well and ensure that a close check is kept on standards and the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. The headteacher has ensured that the information arising from all leaders' excellent self-evaluation is used well to further boost pupils' achievement and the quality of provision within the school. Good examples of this are the pupils' impressive achievement at the end of Year 2, and the improving standards in writing across the school. In Years 1 and 2, evaluation showed that there was a need to lift teachers' expectations of what the pupils could achieve, and to strengthen pupils' learning by helping them to understand what they needed to do to meet the lesson objectives. As a consequence, adaptations were made to teaching and learning which led to exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 in 2008.

The whole-school focus on improving standards in writing is also paying dividends. In the lower years, the strengthening of teaching of letters and sounds is having a positive impact. Throughout the school, pupils are having more opportunities to write for interesting and meaningful purposes. This has helped to close the gap between standards in reading and writing, although there is still more to do. Even though standards in English are exceptionally high, those for writing still lag a little behind reading. Overall, standards are exceptionally high in

English, mathematics and science, and current Year 6 pupils are on track to maintain this level in 2009.

Staff ensure that the outstanding curriculum is rich, broad and made relevant to the school's pupils, and as a result it helps pupils to gain strong academic and personal skills. A wide range of activities is provided, including French for all pupils and, in addition, Spanish for Years 5 and 6. However, the particular strength lies in the quality and extent of the provision for the arts, particularly music, dance and the visual arts. The school's Artsmark Gold award is testimony to the quality of this provision. All pupils have the opportunity to learn an instrument, the quality of singing is very high, and the depth and richness of the curriculum is also evidenced by the high-quality displays of arts and crafts. Although a few parents commented that they felt the range of sporting opportunities available is limited, this is not the case. In addition to the extra-curricular activities, the school's close liaison with the local sports partnership engenders a wide range of sporting activities, and this is recognised by the sports Activemark.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children achieve outstandingly well because the provision is so very good. Several parents reported how pleased they are with their children's rapid progress. They enter school with skills similar to those expected for children of their age, though there is a wide variation. By the time they leave the Reception year, their skills are well above average for their age in all areas of learning.

There is a strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills, which develop extremely well. Children behave sensibly and show caring attitudes, as seen when they looked after the dolls in their 'Baby Clinic' as carefully as if they were real babies. They work well independently, and are able to persist when engaged in a practical task such as cutting out parts of a policeman's uniform, which they later proudly wear and show off. They make excellent progress in gaining literacy skills through the rigorous phonics programme. Because of this, higher-attaining children are already able to contribute to the book about helpful people that is being written by Year 1 children in the same class. Calculation and problem-solving skills also develop very well.

Adult support is highly skilled. Staff make learning fun with exciting and stimulating activities such as a word treasure hunt. They ensure that work is effectively planned both indoors and outdoors, and consider the unique talents of every child when doing so. This is achieved because staff make excellent use of regular observations to track children's individual progress. As a result, all are challenged to achieve exceptionally well.

All staff are committed to a high quality of care for the children. The setting is well-equipped, safe and secure. The outside area is rather small and has no permanent shelter for all-weather outdoor activities.

Leadership and management are exemplary, and the impact of this is shown by the quality of children's learning and achievement. There is a strong partnership with parents. Children are extremely well prepared to move up to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the high-quality plans to further reduce the gap between standards in reading and writing.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Welford and Wickham Church of England Primary School, Newbury, RG20 8HL

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for helping us so well and making us welcome. We really enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. I particularly enjoyed watching your drumming and dancing rehearsals for the Anvil performance. We can see why you enjoy school so much because yours is an outstanding school.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- You make excellent progress in your learning, enjoy school, behave exceptionally well, and want to do your best. Well done for this!
- The staff take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe and very well looked after, so remember to say 'thank you' to them for this.
- Your teachers do an excellent job. Teaching is outstanding and you thoroughly enjoy learning.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job too. She is supported very well by all the other adults in the school.
- The quality and standard of your work is very impressive.

We have asked the school to continue to focus on one thing:

- make sure that your progress in writing is as quick as it is in reading.

You can help by making sure that you work as hard as possible to meet your targets.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector