

# West Wycombe Combined School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110236
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325113
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Stephens

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	208
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Carole Burslem
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Cobb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane West Wycombe High Wycombe HP14 3AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 523 318
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 523 620

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the success of leadership and management in introducing accurate and effective systems of assessment, tracking and monitoring and the impact it is having on ensuring that the teaching meets the needs of the pupils
- the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' personal development.

Evidence was gathered from: visits to lessons; sampling pupils' work; discussions with pupils, staff and governors; the school's documentation and assessment information; and the inspection questionnaires returned from parents. 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

This school is similar in size to other primary schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most of whom find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, is less than in most schools. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is similar to that found in most schools. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, who are taught in a separate Reception class. There have been substantial changes to the leadership team very recently, and many changes of both teaching and administration staff during the past two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Staffing is now more stable, and new leadership and administration teams have been put in place. There is evidence that these teams are beginning to have a positive impact on both the efficient running of the school and the rate of progress made by pupils to reach and maintain higher standards. The majority of parents are supportive of the school. However, an appreciable minority expressed concerns about communication, especially about pupils' progress and the impact of staff changes, and a few were concerned about bullying. Observations and interviews with pupils indicated that behaviour is good, and procedures to deal with bullying are secure. Teachers act decisively when made aware of problems. The governors are aware that communication is an on-going area for development following the 'communication survey' conducted with parents last year.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills that vary each year but are typically above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. They make good progress, and most of them securely meet the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. In addition, most children exceed the standards expected of five-year-olds to reach levels that are securely within the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. The progress made by pupils up to the end of Year 2 is satisfactory overall. There is evidence from a local authority review which indicates that teachers' assessments and test scores may have been inflated in the past. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 until their final year when, because of consistently good teaching, it accelerates, especially in writing. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they have attained standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are articulate and keen to share their thoughts about the school. They enjoy school and understand very well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils respond well to the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Behaviour is good, both in classes and around the school. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities, and the school council talk with pride about how they raised money for a 'friendship bench' placed on the playground. 'We're really pleased,' explained a council member, 'because it is well used and so nobody is really lonely.' Attendance is good, reflecting how well pupils enjoy school.

Teaching varies from satisfactory to good, and is satisfactory overall. There is scope to improve the teaching further so that it is more consistent. Currently, inconsistencies lead to variable rates of progress between groups of pupils and across classes. There have been some good improvements recently that have helped to accelerate the progress of pupils throughout the school, but more training and improvements are needed to raise standards still further. Successful lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and teachers are skilled at asking questions that motivate the pupils to greater efforts. They provide many opportunities for pupils to support each other in their learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always well matched to need, pupils spend too long listening, and activities are over-directed, allowing pupils too few opportunities to show initiative and apply the skills they have been taught. Pupils who find aspects of learning challenging, especially in the areas of language and mathematics, and the very few for whom English is an additional language, benefit from the additional support they receive. They make satisfactory progress overall, but this accelerates as they receive the additional support offered by 'booster' classes in English and mathematics.

The good curriculum supports learning well because recent changes ensure that pupils benefit from more first-hand experiences that in turn help to increase their interest and motivation. Pupils talk confidently about how information and communication technology (ICT) has helped them in their learning. They enjoy visits such as that by Year 6 to Hazard Alley. This visit not only increased their knowledge of how to stay safe in different environments, but also gave them much to talk and write about when they returned to school.

Pupils are well cared for, and the staff provide good pastoral support. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are secure and well known. Academic support and guidance has strengths, but is satisfactory overall. Most pupils interviewed knew and understood their learning targets. Teachers mark pupils work consistently well and ensure that the pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. However, assessment procedures using ICT to monitor and track the progress that pupils make have recently been introduced, and are still in need of development and staff training. The information gained is not yet used consistently, and the school has rightly made the increasing use of this information by teachers to set even more appropriate and challenging targets a top priority.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management structures have recently been reviewed. Roles and responsibilities at all levels are being defined, but this work is not complete. It is too soon to judge the long-term impact of the very new senior leadership team but it has got off to a good start. It is establishing priorities, such as the need to use the information gained from tracking pupils' progress more effectively to ensure that work is consistently well matched to need. These priorities are being recorded in the revised school improvement plan. Procedures to rigorously evaluate the impact of the senior leadership team are not yet well established. The newly appointed administrative team is getting to grips with procedures, and is rapidly giving the headteacher more support. Governance is satisfactory. Governors do not yet use the information that is now being collected on achievement and progress to rigorously hold both the headteacher and the senior leaders to account for standards attained and the progress pupils make. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Although pupils develop an adequate understanding of different customs through the celebration of festivals, the school does not currently give pupils enough first-hand opportunities to gain a real understanding of cultures within the United Kingdom and thereby increase their understanding of the wider world.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start and make good progress from starting points that vary but are generally above what is usually expected. The stimulating indoor and outdoor environments, and the wide range of well-planned activities, provide firm foundations for children's learning. Teaching is consistently good. All adults have a secure understanding of how young children learn. Children settle well and make good progress as a result. Children's speaking and listening skills are actively encouraged, especially through role play. They were seen enjoying the imaginative play in the 'travel agents'. Additionally, a skilfully taught language programme is successfully improving children's knowledge of letter sounds, preparing them well in learning how to read and write. Children who have speech and language difficulties are well supported, as are the very few children who are new to learning English. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and those that children choose for themselves.

Children's personal development is good and contributes to their good progress and social skills. All children work and play harmoniously. The good provision made for their welfare means that they settle into school quickly and happily, have good relationships with staff, and enjoy

learning. The well-established key person system allows staff to get to know and understand children's learning and social needs. There are good induction procedures to support children entering Reception and then moving into Year 1.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is new to the role but has made a very good start in improving the curriculum and developing assessment procedures. Assessment of children's progress is carried out well, and is beginning to provide a good overview of their development. However, the system in place is new and not fully established.

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent throughout the school so that work is always well matched to pupils' needs in order to accelerate their progress and raise standards.
- Embed the newly defined roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership and administration teams so that they can, with governors, more effectively contribute to school self-evaluation procedures.
- Ensure that information gained from the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is widely understood by staff and governors and is used to set challenging targets that are well understood by the pupils.
- Review, improve and monitor communication links between the school and parents.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

24 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Wycombe Combined School, High Wycombe, HP14 3AH

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed meeting you, looking at your work, and hearing about all the interesting things that you do.

You go to a satisfactory school, but there are many things that happen in your school that are good - here are some of them.

- Your teachers care for you very well.
- They plan many exciting and interesting things for you to do.
- Most of you enjoy school. You play well together and your behaviour is good. You tell us that bullying rarely happens. However, remember to tell your teachers if ever you feel you are being bullied.
- Your teachers provide many interesting clubs, out-of-school activities and visitors.
- You listen well and follow instructions carefully.

Every school, even yours, has things that could be improved.

- Some of your teachers have recently taken on new leadership responsibilities. We have asked them to quickly get to know everything about your school, because this will help them advise your headteacher so that she can plan well to ensure that you all continue to make good progress over time.
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that all your lessons really help you to improve all aspects of your work to enable you to make even faster progress, so that standards in English, mathematics and science can improve further.
- Your teachers carefully monitor how well you are doing. Now they all need to use this information really well to set you even more challenging targets that will help you to make better progress and reach higher standards.
- We have asked your headteacher to do her best to make sure that all your parents and carers understand what is happening at school, and what teachers are doing to support you in your learning.

Yours faithfully

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector