

Two Waters Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117108
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326527
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	230
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	Mrs Jude Hardcastle
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Maykels
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Ridge Close Apsley Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 0AU
Telephone number	01442 256046
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Two Waters is an average size primary school. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below the national average. None is learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of the pupils in this group have speech, language and communication difficulties. Most pupils come from favourable economic backgrounds. Very few pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. The school holds the Active Sportsmark and the Healthy School Award.

Since the last inspection, the school has gone through changes in leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher took up the permanent position a week before the inspection, having undertaken the role of interim headteacher from September 2007 to July 2008.

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 school which provides sound value for money. Parents are very supportive of the school and of the recently appointed headteacher. Many wrote about their concerns that the school has had three headteachers in the last three years. One wrote, 'We are delighted that Mrs Maykels has been appointed headteacher. In her temporary headship, the school developed in a positive and noticeable manner.' Many others echoed this sentiment. Indeed, several of the initiatives the headteacher and the second interim headteacher put in place are leading to improvements. This is particularly so in the Early Years Foundation Stage where provision is now good. As a result of these changes, children are making good progress.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most children enter the nursery with skills and knowledge typical of children nationally. A minority of children enter above the levels expected. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are typically above average. Recent teacher assessments show that standards are rising. However, pupils' progress is variable because there are inconsistencies in teaching. Although there are examples of good practice in both key stages, teaching is satisfactory because it is not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Improved planning, the identification of clear learning objectives and robust assessments are raising teachers' and pupils' expectations. Pupils, including the more able, are not always challenged by the work they have to do.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. All staff place significant importance on ensuring all pupils are safe and well cared for. Statutory health, safety and safeguarding requirements are met. Strategies to support pupils' academic guidance are developing well. Pupils know their targets in writing, mathematics and science. This is contributing effectively to raising standards and quickening the rate of pupils' progress. The good relationships and the strong pastoral care promote personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, well. However, pupils' contributions in school and in the wider community are not as strong. Overall, their personal development is good. They enjoy school and would recommend the school to others. One said, 'Oh yes, we like school, it's a very happy place and the teachers are nice.'

Leadership and management are satisfactory with sound capacity across all levels of management to ensure that the school continues to improve. The headteacher, based on her previous knowledge of the school, has a clear view for its development and has already identified areas for improvement. They include ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning and reviewing the content and teaching of the curriculum. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, the headteacher has rightly identified that it does not focus sufficiently on making cross-curricular links or developing pupils' independent learning skills. The majority of middle managers and governors are relatively recent appointees. Middle managers are clear about what they have to do to bring about improvements but as yet have had limited time to undertake their roles. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are developing their roles effectively and have dealt with the lack of a permanent headteacher well. They are supportive and are developing skills in asking challenging questions and holding the school more to account.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are good in both the Nursery and Reception. Good links with parents help children to settle well and they quickly adapt to routines and expectations. Staff place a high priority on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills and this successful work helps children to take responsibility and develop good skills as learners. Children's behaviour and attitudes are good because stimulating activities maintain their interests both in class and outside. Children work and play well together and enjoy school. Teaching is good. Staff have a strong understanding of how young children learn and use this effectively to plan a good range of activities which support learning. They make satisfactory use of information gained from assessing children to match tasks more closely to capabilities and follow the children's interests.

Provision to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is good. Children have many opportunities to experiment and explore within a safe and supportive environment. They follow routines well, which develop good hygiene practices and are learning how to stay healthy. Leadership and management are good and reflect in the high aspirations of staff. There has been rapid improvement following recent support from the local authority. There is a clear plan which correctly identifies the need to develop the outside area for the Reception class. In the meantime, these children benefit greatly from using the Nursery facilities in the afternoon. Good provision results in children achieving well so that by the time they enter Year 1, most are working at levels above those usually seen in children of this age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good or better progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Build on the existing strengths of the curriculum to make it more interesting and exciting for the pupils.
- Develop the work of leaders and managers at all levels in order to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's most recent assessment information shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress, but it varies between classes. This occurs because of variations in the quality of teaching. At the end of Year 6, standards are generally above average. However, there has been a decline over the last three years and there were marked variations between standards in English, mathematics and science. Currently, standards in Years 5 and 6 are above average, with little variation between the subjects. This is because teachers have made better use of assessments and raised expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have varied between average and above average. In 2006 and 2007, standards dipped and were similar to the national averages. In 2008, standards rose significantly and were above average. Pupils in the current

Year 2 are on track to reach higher standards again. Pupils who find learning difficult are making similar progress to their peers. More able pupils make broadly satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well. These features support their learning effectively. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take on responsibilities. For example, in Year 2 they read to the younger children in the Nursery. Pupils are developing as responsible and confident learners, with concern for others' feelings. Good relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, ensure a calm and harmonious environment throughout the school. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through their work on the school council, where they help to improve the school, and to the wider community through raising funds for charities. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the diversity of modern Britain and the global community. They have a good understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices by eating a balanced diet and exercising regularly. This is influencing what they do. They use playtimes well to exercise and keep fit. Pupils recognise unacceptable behaviour and know how to stay safe. Pupils' good personal skills and their above average standards in numeracy and literacy provide a strong platform for success in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils are keen and eager to learn and teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well. They are consistent in the way they reinforce good behaviour positively through praise. Teaching is competent but not consistently effective to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and provide valuable support for pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers plan conscientiously and in the best lessons provide pupils with activities that are lively, challenge their thinking and accelerate their learning. In some lessons teachers make clear the measures by which the outcomes will be judged and use them effectively to help the pupils evaluate their learning. Teachers use questioning skills well but do not consistently follow up initial questions with supplementary ones to challenge and extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Pupils make slower progress in lessons where the work is not matched precisely enough to their needs and abilities or the tasks are not explained sufficiently clearly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors to the school, themed days and a range of lunchtime and after school clubs. These and other activities support the pupils' educational and personal development effectively. All pupils take part in food technology lessons, which promote their understanding of healthy living, staying safe and understanding of personal hygiene well. The teaching of French contributes to pupils' cultural development and understanding of global communities. The revised national guidance for literacy and numeracy is being implemented well and is leading to accelerated progress in English and mathematics. Staff are in the early stages of developing a curriculum that links learning between subjects. Staff develop some

basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other lessons, for example, through writing in other subjects and in linking mathematical shapes with art and design work. However, the curriculum sometimes does not capture the interest and imagination of the pupils, provide them with sufficient opportunities to contribute to the curriculum or focus sufficiently on developing their skills in undertaking independent research.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff build good relationships with pupils and support their personal development effectively. They take good care of pupils in the school's safe and supportive environment. Routines are clear and well established so children feel secure and know who to go to if they are worried or have a problem. Teachers successfully work with a range of agencies and specialists to ensure pupils' additional needs are well met. Systems are in place to quickly identify those in danger of falling behind with their learning and additional strategies support their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff take pupils' safety and well-being seriously and all appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils' academic guidance is good. Staff set targets and in lessons tell pupils what they have done well and how to do better. However, marking does not always clearly show how pupils can improve their work or relate to their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Ways of organising the school introduced by the interim headteachers and close working with the local authority are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Based on her previous experience in the school, the headteacher has a clear vision for its development. Middle managers are developing their roles and responsibilities satisfactorily but do not make a significant impact on raising standards. Governors are supportive. They fulfil more of their roles in challenging the school to bring about further improvements. Using projected outcomes for each pupil, they set realistic but still challenging statutory targets. Governors actively encourage involvement in the local community and have begun to undertake an audit of community needs. They have already identified there is more work to be done to develop pupils' understanding of other communities both in Europe and globally.

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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?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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?	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	3
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

11 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Two Waters Primary School, Hemel Hempstead. HP3 0AU

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You were very friendly and polite. You behave well in class and in the playground. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and to see that your attendance is above average. You told us about how much you enjoy your food technology lessons, you know about what you should eat to stay healthy and about the importance of having lots of exercise. We were pleased to see that you know and use your targets for improvement in writing, mathematics and science. This is helping you to reach above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science - well done.

We know that you have experienced a lot of changes with the different headteachers and teachers. Leaders now have the task of making sure that the work they do will help all of you make quicker progress. To help you, we have asked the headteacher and governors to make certain this happens.

Currently your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You are making satisfactory progress overall. However, those of you who are in the Nursery and Reception class are now making good progress. This is because of the recent changes that have been made in the classrooms and in the way the teachers teach you. In the rest of the school, your progress is satisfactory and sometimes good. It varies because there are differences in the quality of the teaching. The school is starting to make sure all the teaching is at least good. We think this is a good idea and have asked your new headteacher to concentrate on this.

In our discussions with the headteacher, we talked about how the school could make the curriculum even more exciting for you. We think that the work that has already been started on linking your learning in the different subjects is the right thing to do but there is more to be done on this. There are not enough opportunities for you to share your thoughts on what you would like to learn about and to undertake more research work.

We hope all goes well for you in the future.

With best wishes

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector