

Witnesham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124618
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328179
Inspection date	11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	100
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 Kay Lacey
Headteacher	Ms Jan Hubbard
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Road Witnesham Ipswich Suffolk IP6 9EX
Telephone number	01473 785252
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What are the key features that have allowed the school to maintain its good performance since the last inspection?
- How effectively are pupils involved in setting their own targets and making decisions about their own learning?
- How well does the federation of the two schools work for Witnesham?

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work, scrutinising school documentation, parents' questionnaire responses, records of pupils' achievement and progress, and discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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 the report.

Description of the school

Witnesham Primary School is smaller than average. The school serves the village and draws pupils from the surrounding area, including Ipswich. Pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils known to qualify for a free school meal is below average. There is an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children's attainment on entry to school is broadly typical of children nationally. Witnesham has the Healthy School award.

The school is federated with Otley Primary School.

There is an onsite pre-school that is not managed by the governing body, which was inspected separately at the same time as the 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

Witnesham Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school life very much and their behaviour is excellent. Many parents returned the questionnaire and typical of their responses is, 'I am very happy with both my children's progress at Witnesham.' Pupils are well cared for and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The school has maintained the good features identified at the last inspection and pupils are well prepared for their next schools. The good performance of pupils over time is the result of well-planned, consistently good teaching, and pupils' excellent attitudes to work. Teachers manage their classes well and involve pupils in regular discussion activities to develop their thinking skills. In most lessons, pupils make the very most of what they are offered, and this is a key feature of their success. In the end of Year 2 assessments, pupils' standards in reading have been average over the last two years and above average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of work in English, mathematics and science have been above average in national tests. This academic year standards are similar. In 2007, standards were well above average. A scrutiny of a representative sample of pupils' records of progress since they began school show that they have made good progress from their varied starting points. Pupils also make good progress in the breadth of their understanding of other subjects. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils showed that they had a very extensive knowledge for their ages of the main features of the Solar System.

Standards in reading by the end of Year 6 are high because the school immerses all pupils in reading activities and drama. Hence, there is acceleration in their progress at Key Stage 2. The school has a wide range of reading resources for pupils to use that they enjoy, and boys' interest in reading is particularly notable.

Witnesham is an inclusive school where all pupils have equal opportunities to do well. Pupils from all groups make good progress because the teaching matches work well to their needs and interests. Those who find learning difficult make good progress. Adults ensure that they have work that they can do, but which also challenges them. Pupils have extra support in lessons, either individually or in small groups, to help them learn faster. The success of the teaching means that most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities reach the expected national standards by the end of Year 6.

There has been good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). There are interactive whiteboards in each classroom, which teachers use effectively. There is good attention to pupils' Internet safety whilst using computers in school. Pupils have a thirst for knowledge and the school plans to develop this quality further through an ICT 'Learning Platform' approach. This is intended to allow pupils to complete or start work at home, by working directly on an approved Internet programme. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to further their learning extensively across subjects using ICT.

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enough opportunities to further their learning extensively across subjects using ICT. There has been good progress in involving pupils in setting their own targets and making decisions about their learning. Teachers and pupils agree the targets that will help them improve their work and learn more quickly. Parents see the targets in the home-school book, and they are discussed at parents' evenings. Parents who commented on this aspect of the school's work were pleased to be involved so closely in their children's education. Teachers make good use of assessment information about pupils' knowledge and progress to ensure that the targets are realistic, but challenging. In most classes, this work is well embedded and pupils know how to make their work better through this approach.

The federation of the two schools is working well. The benefits for Witnesham already are the sharing of teachers' expertise and learning resources between the two schools, greater leadership roles for those other than the headteacher and a sharing of the workload, such as for governors, which saves time. Pupils at Witnesham have begun to make new friendships with the pupils at Otley. The headteacher and governors provide thoughtful leadership, ably supported by senior staff. All concerned considered this important venture most carefully and preparations were thorough. There is a clear vision for the future of the school and a good capacity on the part of the leadership to move forward together. The school knows itself well, and its self-evaluation is accurate. This quality means the school is always looking to evaluate the impact of changes and decide how worthwhile they are. The school is well placed to improve further.

The school meets its community responsibilities well. Older pupils have responsibilities within the school, such as helping younger ones in the playground, which help it to run efficiently. The school is a major part of the local community, organising, and participating in, a wide range of events. Global issues, such as hunger and drought, and the need for the rich to give to the poor, prompt many fund raising activities.

The school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils learn how human activity affects the world in geography and religious education, and pupils' moral and social awareness is greatly enhanced. Adults skilfully link this work to the programme for personal and social education, to deepen pupils' understanding of ideas such as prejudice. Pupils' understanding of the need to value others different from themselves benefits considerably from the work they do about asylum seekers, researched and prepared by another local school. A residential visit puts pupils in problem-solving situations where a mock disaster has occurred. Pupils are required, for example, to create a water source and purify the supply. These activities help to raise pupils' awareness of different people's needs and life experiences. Pupils have pen pals in a Dutch school. The next planned development is to link more closely with a school in a different area so that pupils can continue improving their understanding of how life is for others, make and receive visits and share experiences.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and by the end of the EYFS nearly all reach the standards expected and a significant proportion exceed them. Those who find learning difficult also progress well. Parents are very happy with what the school provides. One, typical of many, wrote, 'I think that the Reception class is a fantastic start to my child's educational journey.' Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through regular meetings. In class, the children are keen to explain what they have done and why. Children play happily on their own and with others and behaviour is good. If there is a disagreement, this is dealt with by staff kindly and firmly.

Children are encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle. Health, safety and safeguarding meet requirements and as a result, children feel safe.

The EYFS leader has a good knowledge of the children and their individual needs. Effective systems are in place to record children's development in all areas of learning through the local authority's 'Learning Journal' initiative. This helps to identify their next steps in learning. Additional staff in Reception are active and stimulate discussions with children and encourage their interest in their work effectively.

The curriculum effectively covers all of the required areas of learning and staff ensure that there is a good balance of adult and child-led learning. However, not all activities are sufficiently engaging and allow children to do as many things for themselves as they can and children's independence could be developed further. The outside area is not an inviting and stimulating space for playing and learning. The school has identified this as an area for development in order to meet all the requirements of the new EYFS curriculum fully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor facilities in the EYFS to meet the latest requirements for young children.
- Carry out the planned developments for ICT, to allow pupils to use and improve their research skills more extensively

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Witnesham Primary, Witnesham, IP6 9EX

It was good to meet many of you, see you at work and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the Year 5 and 6 pupils we met during lunchtime and to those of you we joined in the dining room. This letter is to give you a clear idea of what is in our full report. Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make a good start in Reception.
- You make good progress with your work in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 and reach above average standards by the time you leave.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit. Everyone has a chance to do well.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers make lessons interesting.
- You are growing up as responsible young citizens and older pupils help the younger ones.
- You work hard and behave extremely well.

I agree with your teachers that the school needs to:

- improve the outdoor activity area for Reception children
- give you more opportunities to work with ICT to develop your research skills.

You can help by continuing to behave well, by working hard and showing interest in your work. We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry

Lead inspector