

John Wesley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133627
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	328718
Inspection date	2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Timothy Wilson
Headteacher	Gail Spragg
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wesley School Road Singleton Ashford TN23 5LW
Telephone number	01233 614660
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2007 as a combined Church of England and Methodist faith school on the edge of Ashford. It has a three-year opening plan to expand its roll gradually and it is currently about half full. There are single age classes in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with a small Year 2 class. There are mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. The new school has attracted a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More pupils than expected join during the school year. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which currently consists of one Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. One of its strengths lies in the quality of welfare and pastoral care, leading to pupils developing very good attitudes towards learning.

The single-minded drive of the headteacher ensures that her young team share her very clear vision for the school. When it opened, the school attracted a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some with interrupted education. The first priority was attending to pupils' emotional and behavioural needs and getting them ready to learn. The results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in July 2008 were disappointing and were below the national average, except in reading, which had been a focus of teaching. There has been rapid progress since then and although standards are still below the national average in some year groups, because of those children's very low attainment on entry or their additional needs, pupils are now achieving well across the school. Consequently, standards are quickly rising, with the current Year 6 working at broadly average levels overall, with more of them on target to reach the higher levels than in the previous year. In English, standards in writing are lower than those in reading and there needs to be more opportunities to write in different subjects so that pupils can practise and improve their skills.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved and is good. Pupils' enthusiastic enjoyment of school can be seen in rates of attendance that are above the national average. As one parent said of her daughter, 'She would come to JWS at weekends and holidays if allowed to.' Those whose children had a difficult time in previous schools say their children feel secure and their self-esteem and confidence have improved tremendously. The staff team have worked hard to create this friendly and happy place of safety. For example, everyone wears slippers at school: a decision made from the early days of construction and worn to promote a relaxed homely atmosphere. There is rigour at the same time; the school is rich in data and is at the forefront of developing good practice in the use of information and communication technology.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school staff are adept at collecting, constructing and analysing data to aid pupils' learning. There is close tracking of pupils' progress and speedy action when underachievement is spotted so that pupils quickly get back on track. A good range of interventions led by skilled support staff is helping to raise standards. The curriculum is satisfactory because there are not enough opportunities for writing in different subjects, for multicultural experiences throughout the school and for exciting outdoor learning in the EYFS, where provision is otherwise good.

Leadership and management are good. The chair of governors and vice-chair provide a strong spiritual lead to the school that is the foundation of its ethos. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has an eye for quality in appointing staff. She is on a relentless mission to develop her staff and governors, and they are eager to take up the challenge. As a result, the school's capacity for improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The achievement of children in the EYFS is good because they are taught well, provision is well led and there are good assessment procedures. Last year's children started school with few working at the expected levels for their age, and some still require a modified Early Years

Curriculum in Year 1. They made good progress, and standards rose to below average levels by the end of the EYFS. Children in the current Reception class had slightly higher starting points. Teachers' assessment and record-keeping are good, so staff know that this year children's skills and abilities are already reaching higher standards that are close to national averages. Children in the current Reception class have the same areas of weakness in language and mathematical development, but not the same level of social and emotional need as last year. Children's physical development is good because welfare is outstanding and members of staff have fully gained the trust of parents; one said, 'I have complete faith in the whole team.' The special needs co-ordinator identifies children with additional difficulties promptly, introduces interventions and training, and then tracks progress carefully. Behaviour management is good, being based on warm relationships between adults and children. Teachers' planning is good and involves many engaging activities, but the outside area does not stimulate children's imagination enough. Children have too few opportunities for mark making, especially as part of their outdoor play and this sets them off on a weaker footing for writing in Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing throughout the school by giving pupils more opportunities to write in different subjects.
- Plan more outdoor activities that promote imaginative play in the EYFS.
- Strengthen pupils' cultural awareness by giving them opportunities to learn about the wide range of other communities in Britain and abroad.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The un-validated results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in July 2008 show a school with below average standards, except in reading, which had been a focus since the school opened. Reading standards reached the national average in 2008. The school's data show that, in the first year of its opening, progress was inadequate and uneven, with not all pupils progressing as well as they should have done. This was because pupils entering the new school often had a history of exclusions or poor attendance. Information was sparse and assessment on entry showed standards that were well below the expected levels. The headteacher's strategy was rightly to concentrate on pupils' well-being so that they were ready to learn and this is now paying off. All pupils now enjoy school: they are settled, attend regularly and have very good attitudes. Many are making more than the expected rate of progress due to consistently good teaching and extra support. Consequently, achievement is now good and this holds for all groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' work, the school's data and lesson observations show that standards are still variable between subjects, with writing still weaker than reading. Nevertheless, pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach broadly average standards overall by the end of the current year, reflecting good progress over time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a happy, caring school where the staff model outstanding teamwork. Pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is outstanding. One parent described her child as changing from 'shy and nervous' to 'confident and outgoing' in one term. A strong caring ethos and shared values have turned pupils around, raising their self-esteem and making them proud to be part of the

school. Parents and pupils can provide no evidence of bullying. Pupils are friendly. For example, older pupils greet the little ones on the way to school. Multicultural development is satisfactory and has rightly been identified by leaders as an area for development because the curriculum does not give pupils enough opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. Pupils are learning well how to stay healthy and fit and how to handle their emotions when they are finding life difficult. Pupils' behaviour is good, although there are not enough playtime activities to engage both boys and girls. Many pupils stay at school to attend a wide range of clubs. Pupils are active in their school community and have a strong presence locally. They thoroughly enjoy school and their above average attendance demonstrates this. Although standards are rising, relatively weak writing skills and the pupils' limited knowledge of the world of work and money mean that pupils' economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding lessons. Pupils' attitudes, after much work by the united staff, are very good and this leads to productive classrooms. Teachers set clear boundaries for pupils' behaviour so they can all feel safe. Relationships are excellent and teachers are very good at managing time and the range of activities. Teachers are comfortable handling data and understand how to use it to match work to pupils' needs, including those in the mixed-age groups. There is a sharp focus at the ends of lessons on checking progress. Despite this, a small number of higher ability pupils correctly feel that activities do not always stretch them. This is not always the case. For example, in a science lesson, more able pupils had to use their initiative to design their own table for recording and this challenged them and promoted good independent learning. Currently, marking is satisfactory and the school is rightly reviewing its system to make it more effective. Marking congratulates pupils on their work rather than informing them how to improve. In Key Stage 2, pupils are being encouraged to self-assess and this good practice is leading to improved learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A distinctive 'John Wesley School' curriculum is still developing and has a themed approach based on different topics. Class groupings are changed to accommodate rising numbers but this is managed well. For example, there is flexibility within class organisation so that the EYFS curriculum can be extended into Year 1 for those pupils who still need it. There is a strong spiritual component through daily worship, separate religious education lessons and classroom prayers, and this sets the tone for the school and for pupils' good personal development. Other strengths of the curriculum are in science and in the use of special programmes to promote reading skills. Consequently, pupils reach higher standards in these subjects. The school is developing links between subjects, but there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum. Information and communication technology is taught very effectively as part of other subjects. This leads to high standards and rich experiences. While creative aspects of the curriculum are good, and singing is a real strength, opportunities are missed to celebrate cultural diversity and to meet other communities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

From the headteacher to the office staff, all adults provide outstanding pastoral support. Parents say that members of staff are always ready to 'go the extra mile' and they find them supportive and welcoming. The procedures for safeguarding children are exemplary and it is a very vigilant school, with good links with outside agencies. Induction procedures for the many pupils who arrive during the school year are good and help them to settle quickly. Behaviour management is consistent and innovative: pupils have to phone home if they misbehave and others choose their punishment. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the effectiveness of interventions is regularly evaluated.

Academic guidance is good. The school is rich in data, class teachers use and understand them and track pupils' progress well. Pupils have a group target in lessons, but individual targets are only set in literacy and numeracy. While older pupils can say what level they are working at, they do not see models of work they can aspire to.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governors have a shared Christian vision for the school. The headteacher has built up a strong team of staff through training and instilling the idea that the school is a safe place, not just for children, but also for staff to be adventurous, share and learn. Generous staffing levels allow time for training and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and all teachers take part. This has led to improved teaching and greater consistency in provision across the school. Familiar school staff cover for training and absences and this brings an extra element of stability to the pupils' learning. There are strong partnerships with local churches and schools. The governing body has a relevant range of skills, a strong commitment to the school and the confidence to challenge the headteacher as well as support her. The local authority has provided useful temporary support through its start-up programme, and is setting targets that are very challenging given the previous achievement of pupils entering the school. Leaders are aware that to strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion, they need to do more to teach pupils about the world beyond Ashford. There is good capacity to improve, as shown by the good progress made already in the 15 months that the school has been open. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate, based on a wealth of data and there is a good understanding of what needs to be improved.

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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	NA
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?	1
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	3
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?	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	1
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	3

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?	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?	2
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	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?	3
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**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The John Wesley Church of England/Methodist Aided Primary School, Ashford, TN23 5LW

You may remember that two inspectors came to visit your school recently. We should have brought our slippers! We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you working hard. I am writing to tell you what we found.

You go to a good school. One pupil, who has attended several schools, said it was the best school he had ever been to. Parents say you have become more confident since you came to JWS. Your attendance is good because you enjoy the lessons and you like all the staff. Your headteacher and teachers have worked very hard to make sure you are safe and very well cared for. Your behaviour is good and you love to learn. Teachers plan interesting and fun lessons and almost always give you work that makes you really think. You are making good progress, especially in your reading, but you are not reaching high enough standards in writing. The children in the Reception class are making good progress but their outdoor learning area is not very exciting. Some of you are lucky enough to have family living in other parts of the world. We think everyone in school needs to know more about other communities abroad and in Britain. Your headteacher and all the other adults are keen to improve the school. We have asked them to do three things to make the school even better.

- Improve standards in writing by giving you many more opportunities to write, even the youngest children. You can help by writing lists and stories at home.
- Improve the outdoor area in the Reception class so that it is more exciting and helps children to learn better.
- Give you interesting ways to learn about people from other backgrounds in Britain and in other countries.

Very best wishes,

Yours faithfully

Ann Sydney

Lead inspector