

Wareside Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117412
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	339002
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Bob Drew

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Mark Dunstan
Headteacher	Elaine Batten
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Eight lessons were observed and all three class teachers seen. Meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body were held. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at key policies, monitoring documents, records of pupils' performance and the school's self-evaluation form. Twenty-seven parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils generally tend to attain less well in Year 6 tests than in Year 2 and, if so, why this is
- how far changes since the last inspection have improved rates of progress
- the particular strengths in the school's promotion of pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

This is a small village school, with slowly rising rolls. It has a Nursery and Reception class plus two other mixed-age classes. It serves Wareside village and the surrounding countryside. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The overwhelming majority are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including with formal statements, is well above average. Most commonly, they have moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia. The school has held the Active Mark for several years and has recently acquired Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has some good features; indeed, relationships with parents and carers are outstanding. Their support has intensified, largely due to the headteacher making this a focus for her work and to her approachable style. Other improvements include better use of assessment, good new appointments and the successful promotion of healthy lifestyles. The school well deserves its Healthy Schools award.

There has been some improvement since the last inspection, but the school has not managed to shift teaching and progress from 'satisfactory with good features,' as found at the time of the previous inspection, to good teaching and progress across the school. There is more teaching that is of good quality than in the previous inspection, but the consistent strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are not present in Key Stage 2, where teaching and learning are satisfactory. The pace of lessons for the younger pupils is swift and demanding, with clear instructions and questioning at every turn, whereas both features are less well developed further up the school. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is generally good whereas, in Key Stage 2, it is satisfactory. This is partly because pupils' targets in Year 6 are not challenging enough. Attainment in English and mathematics when pupils leave the school is broadly average, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Different groups of pupils make broadly similar progress.

Personal development, the curriculum and care, guidance and support are all strong and staff and pupil surveys are very positive about the school's leadership. Staff are consistent in helping pupils to respond to praise and encouragement. As a result, behaviour and enjoyment are good and attendance is above average. Pupils are keen to learn and enthusiastic about contributing to school life. They feel safe and act with freedom and confidence in class and around the extensive, well-equipped outdoor areas. Pupils are successfully encouraged to eat healthily and take exercise. Support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and these pupils benefit sufficiently to match the progress of their peers. The school is especially successful at boosting their confidence, by using accessible resources and astute deployment of teaching assistants.

Leaders and managers have a satisfactory impact on standards and progress and have sustained the good personal development of pupils seen in the last inspection. The school's capacity to improve, reflecting its recent track record, is satisfactory. It is strengthening because the headteacher's initiatives are gaining momentum and the increasingly influential governing body is fully aware of what needs to be done. The school's self-evaluation has erred on the generous side regarding achievement and

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aspects of teaching, but is now accurately focussed on establishing specific strategies to improve both.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the academic year 2012, establish progress that is at least good in all areas of the school through:
 - working to Year 6 targets that are higher than current ones and would set attainment clearly above the national average
 - adjusting targets for other years to make this a whole-school responsibility.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - the pace of lessons is always strong
 - setting of tasks and questioning are clear and highly efficient.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that broadly match expectations. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, exceeding expectations by the time they leave Reception. Their attainment in English and mathematics is consistently above average in Year 2 tests, but pupils perform more variably at the end of Year 6, where standards, on balance, are average. Overall, this amounts to satisfactory achievement between entering and leaving school, though progress between tests in Years 2 and 6 has sometimes been inadequate for some pupils. This feature was more prominent at the time of the previous inspection and some improvement has been made through more effective teaching and better assessment procedures. More remains to be done to ensure the good progress seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is sustained in Key Stage 2, particularly in establishing stronger paced teaching and higher expectations for the oldest pupils. Different pupil groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make broadly similar progress.

The school is very adept at helping its pupils enjoy learning and become involved in school life and that of the wider community. They are generally mature and self-reliant and behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Their positive attitudes, good social skills and satisfactory academic progress help prepared them appropriately for the next stage of their education. They show an above-average awareness of the ethnic diversity and religious beliefs found in the United Kingdom and global issues that face them. Pupils' awareness of how to stay safe and their commitment to healthy lifestyles are strong. Attendance levels are above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has a satisfactory overall impact on learning and progress. Many positive features are found across the school, especially the good relationships between pupils and staff and effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants. Assessment is used well in lessons, giving emphasis to specific aspects of learning. Long-term targets, however, are insufficiently demanding in Key Stage 2. Teachers are consistent in planning work to meet a wide range of needs in each lesson. The key factor behind differences in the quality of teaching is variable pace. Good lessons are typically brisk without being rushed and move from one focus to another before attention starts to wane. Lessons where teaching and learning are satisfactory are usually steadily paced. The best teaching involves clear, effective setting of tasks, whereas a minority of other lessons lose impact because instructions are complex and lengthy.

The curriculum is stimulating: it gives pupils extensive opportunities for active participation and reinforces skill-development well. French teaching and specialist music lessons broaden provision and there is good enhancement through extra-curricular

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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activities. Gardening club, football and netball are regular features, while end-of-term productions in the village hall involve large numbers and are open to all. Last term's drama production, 'Ghostbusters', illustrates the talent of pupils, who choreographed and produced it, and the commitment of parents, who made costumes.

Care guidance and support are good, promoting pupils' positive attitudes and security. Staff liaise very well with families and are clear about the ethos and attitudes they wish pupils to adopt. Good behaviour is consistently rewarded and there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for instance, as playground helpers in Year 6, whom the younger pupils respect. The small size of the school is exploited well so pupils are known and cared for from their arrival in Nursery and even before that through close links with home. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families are well supported, and the school makes good use of other agencies to provide specialist help.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders currently have a satisfactory impact on standards and progress, and they drive some aspects of the school's work well. The headteacher has worked with great success to improve parental support and goes the extra mile to meet parents informally at the school gates and to follow this up with large numbers of telephone conversations where greater confidentiality is required. A significant number of parents now also work for the school, helping run after-schools clubs or as classroom assistants. Almost 90 per cent of families returned a parental questionnaire and the responses were exceptionally positive. She has ensured that teaching makes much better use of day-to-day assessment and good appointments have been made to secure more effective teaching. The school has sustained the good personal development found at the last inspection, and attendance has improved. The governing body has a satisfactory impact on standards, but shows a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and full commitment to supporting and challenging senior staff.

The school promotes community cohesion well, partly because local links are strong and the curriculum offers in-depth study of other faiths and ethnic groups in the United Kingdom. The global dimension is well represented by thematic studies of poverty and water supply and links with a school in Zambia. Planning is in place to extend these. Equality and discrimination are handled well in some respects and satisfactorily overall.

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Strengths include the fact that there is open access to roles in school productions and places in sports teams. Regular talks from a volunteer with physical disabilities about her own experience in school further widen pupils' awareness of inclusivity. This judgement is satisfactory rather than good because the progress made by older pupils does not match that in the rest of the school. Safeguarding procedures are in good order and reviewed effectively. Several aspects of safety procedure have been significantly refined through consultation with parents. Pupils feel very safe at school, and their parents agree.

The capacity to improve is satisfactory and gaining strength, both because of the momentum behind current initiatives and the governing body's increasing impact. While more requires to be done regarding teaching quality, the headteacher has expanded her lesson observation programme and sought external verification of teaching quality. In-class assessment by staff is being further embedded, with an additional focus on peer and self-assessment by pupils. The governing body has intensified its focus on evaluating school data and now has a very clear awareness of how good progress is to be established.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their schooling. Nursery and Reception provision are run in parallel by the same class teacher and teaching assistant. All children are taught together at times and given separate teaching for significant parts of each session to cater for their different ages and aptitudes. They all make good progress and enjoy themselves immensely, due to effective leadership and

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consistently good teaching. Both members of staff have a clear picture of children's needs on entry and well-planned programmes build on these assessments. Teaching is effective because staff adopt a very welcoming and reassuring manner and move swiftly from one interesting activity to another. A good balance is struck between children choosing tasks for themselves and staff directing their learning. Indoor and outdoor facilities complement each other well and children move easily from one to the other. Teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant is excellent, with either able to initiate a change in activity for individuals or small groups. As a result, children progress well and leave Reception with attainment that exceeds expectations and a very positive attitude to school and learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are remarkably positive about the school; no one registered disapproval with any aspect. Parents are especially pleased with how the school keeps their children safe, informs them about progress, encourages healthy lifestyles and listens to their suggestions. Most significant of all, they are all pleased with their children's overall experience. Inspection evidence supports many of these favourable views, especially those about pupils' personal development. However, it rates progress, teaching and leadership as satisfactory with some strengths, rather than as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wareside Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 41 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	74	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	74	4	15	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	70	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	56	11	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	59	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	78	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	56	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	41	16	59	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	70	7	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wareside Church of England Primary School, Ware, SG12 7QR

I very much enjoyed my recent visit to your school. Thank you for your warm welcome. The school gives you a satisfactory education overall, with many things that are good. I was especially pleased with:

- the good progress you make in Nursery and Reception and Key Stage 1
- your good behaviour
- the way older pupils look out for the younger ones
- the good teaching I saw in some lessons
- the success the headteacher has had in gaining such strong support from your parents and from you.

In order to help the school improve even further, the headteacher and other teachers need to:

- make sure your progress is good right across the school by setting higher targets for you in Year 6 to take standards above average
- increase the amount of good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, by making sure lessons move faster and teachers are even clearer about what they want you to do in lessons.

You can help the school make these improvements, for instance by asking about the progress you are making and being really clear about how to reach high standards.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Wareside Primary.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector

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