

Wollaston Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121874
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359104
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Killman HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Luke Hodson
Headteacher	Sally Hamson
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 11 lessons taught by 10 different teachers; meetings were held with staff, pupils and representatives from the governing body and the parent and carer forum. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment data, curriculum planning, improvement plans, policies and documents, including those related to safeguarding and support for potentially vulnerable pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and undertook an in-depth scrutiny of pupils' written work. Responses to 95 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed and taken into account, as well as 141 from pupils and 13 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- Inspectors examined pupils' current progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science, particularly of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the most-able.
- They identified the key features of good and outstanding teaching that promote good learning.
- The team checked to see how well the school's curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and whether it secures progression and coverage of the National Curriculum.
- Inspectors judged the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, especially where it considered that grades have improved since the last inspection.
- They evaluated the effectiveness of leaders and managers in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

Information about the school

This school is slightly larger than schools of its type nationally. Almost all pupils come from White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well below average. The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language or are known to be eligible for free school meals are also well-below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly typical. Their needs are wide-ranging and include moderate learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties, language and communication needs, hearing impairment and physical disabilities. With the exception of one Reception class, all pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Pre-school provision, breakfast- and after-school clubs are available on site. These are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, the British Council's International Schools Award (intermediate level) and the Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. It is now a good school in most respects. The headteacher provides visionary leadership and is the driving force behind this impressive shift in the school's performance. She knows exactly what is required to ensure that pupils learn effectively and is resolute in her pursuit for improvement. Pupils are thriving in their learning because the innovative curriculum captures their interests and imagination. The school is also inspiring consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching. The adults have a delightful rapport with the pupils and create a climate for productive learning in classrooms. These, together with pupils' good behaviour and attitudes, are the components underpinning pupils' good achievement. Good governance ensures that new strategies and initiatives are considered thoroughly and financed efficiently.

Standards are broadly average. but a pattern of improvement is emerging. Year 6 pupils' attainment in English and particularly in mathematics rose steeply to above average in 2010, for the first time in five years. The school's most recent assessment information indicates that pupils' good progress is leading towards similar outcomes this year. Attainment in science has been restored to average levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress from their starting points. The most-able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 form the group that has yet to excel. The curriculum, generally, satisfies the wide range of abilities encountered within the two-year age span in most classes. However, the higher-attaining pupils, who are capable of taking on a higher level of challenge and difficulty, often have the same starting points as others. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy school and the very large majority of their parents and carers endorse their views. Nonetheless, attendance figures remain average and some pupils lose valuable learning time when they are taken out of school for holidays in term-time.

Senior managers have developed into successful leaders through coaching, professional development and training. They contribute actively to self-evaluation practices, including the monitoring of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is generally accurate although it errs on the side of generosity in judging the difference between outstanding and good provision and outcomes. Subject leaders pool their expertise in curriculum teams and monitor the curriculum closely to ensure pupils' full entitlement to the National Curriculum. The leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage are new to their roles and have not yet had time to develop their skills to the same level. The school demonstrates its good capacity to improve by its striking track record of improving leadership, provision and outcomes for pupils. Staff are giving of their best and work in harmony with leaders and managers to achieve continuing success. This is recognised and appreciated by almost all parents and carers, one of whom expressed gratitude in their comment 'I cannot thank them enough'.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science so that it is consistently above average or high by improving:
 - the provision for the most-able pupils so that their learning is sufficiently challenging
 - the accuracy with which pupils assess their own and other pupils' work and their understanding of their long-term targets.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing:
 - the skills of lead professionals so that self-evaluation identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately
 - the systems to assess children's attainment on entry and beyond accurately
 - the provision for outdoor play so that it extends children's knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Raise attendance to above average by working closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of absences in term-time for family holidays.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Boys' and girls' achievement is good because the school takes swift action to intervene if it identifies significant differences in their performance. Most pupils are working at or above age-related expectations. In lessons, pupils concentrate well, make good progress and the very large majority achieve the learning objectives. They use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment assuredly. The pupils work well with a partner or in groups and this helps them to develop and offer their ideas readily. Pupils focus clearly on the learning objectives and steps to success. While they know what they are learning and how to succeed, pupils do not always evaluate their work in sufficient depth so that they discover exactly what they need to do next to improve. This is because the pupils use methods to evaluate their own and each others' work that are too basic and are not related routinely to their longer-term targets. Their written work is well presented and they take obvious pride in it. Pupils, thoroughly, enjoy performing in class assemblies for family members or working alongside them during the very popular 'Walk in Wednesday' sessions.

The pupils are proud ambassadors of their school. They are polite, respectful, know right from wrong and get on well together. Their understanding of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic diversity is less well developed. Most pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they are worried or upset. They have a good understanding of internet safety and how to live healthy lifestyles. Pupils put forward ideas and views actively through the effective school council; council representatives also contribute to the appointment process for new staff. Year 6 pupils, willingly, take on a range of responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils' enterprise skills are advanced from the Reception Year onwards through regular opportunities to produce and sell products at a profit. They raise funds for national charities. Pupils emerge as confident and mature young people by the end of Year 6.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good because a very large majority of it enables pupils to make good progress and there is none which is inadequate; some is outstanding. All teachers plan lessons with prior achievement in mind especially, as they are teaching mixed-age classes with wide-ranging abilities. Planning aims to meet the needs of different groups so that all pupils are challenged. In practice, however, the starting points are frequently the same for all. This means that learning for the most-able pupils is broken down into small steps when they are capable of striding ahead. Activities for these pupils and for those with special gifts or talents are not always open-ended enough to allow for deeper exploration and originality. Lessons are consistently fast paced with plenty of opportunities for the pupils to contribute through activities that have high appeal for boys and girls. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently well with encouraging comments and next-step targets given where appropriate. Adult support is deployed effectively to provide timely yet sensitive intervention.

The curriculum is designed to excite and inspire. Topics chosen for study reflect the interests of both pupils and teachers and consequently their enthusiasm shines through. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Effective links are made between subjects and between literacy and other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 explored the legend of Ned Kelly, linked to their study of Australia. They debated his moral stance and wrote persuasive letters, using ICT, to justify their

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views. By contrast, work in mathematics is not always set in real-world contexts and sometimes pupils learn methods in isolation. Enrichment opportunities are varied; they are enjoyed by pupils and have a high take-up.

Good-quality care for all pupils lies at the heart of the school's ethos. The school environment is attractive and welcoming. Leaders and managers are extremely creative in transforming potentially unmanageable work spaces into aesthetically pleasing areas for learning. Training for support staff is encouraged strongly. Many have undertaken additional qualifications. The qualifications have equipped them with a deeper understanding of the nature of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities and this enhances the good quality of support. Good provision is available through the family support worker for potentially vulnerable parents, carers and pupils. The introduction of the parent and carer council has had a significant impact in strengthening partnership between home and school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

Leadership and management have improved significantly in most respects since the last inspection. The school's continuous drive to raise aspirations for pupils and staff has generated high morale. Senior leaders and the governing body are actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision and its impact on learning. Data are understood, interpreted accurately and used to set future priorities for improvement. Plans for development cover a three-year span and staff time, as well as money, is calculated carefully to support the school's needs. The school provides good value for money. Priorities are clear, but milestones are not always set so that the school can evaluate its progress towards them. Good arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils and parents and carers are confident that their children are safe in school.

The school is inclusive and the performance of groups is tracked to ensure equality of opportunity. For example, gaps between the performance of girls and boys are closing because of the effective intervention strategies that are employed. The school is inclusive and tackles discrimination determinedly. Pupils with disabilities have full access to all that the school provides and are integrated fully into school life. Work is in progress to promote community cohesion. A satisfactory set of actions has been identified. The school is a cohesive community and work has begun to create links with communities beyond Wollaston. The school recognises the importance of its work in this area and has begun to address this, particularly in raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity through the curriculum.

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Partnerships are developing well. Relationships with parents and carers have been transformed through improved systems for communication, the high visibility and accessibility of staff and the school's willingness to seek and act upon their views. Links with the local secondary school are improving. Education and health professionals contribute effectively to the promotion of pupils' good learning and well-being. The curriculum is supported well by local partners from industry and commerce.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good team work is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They plan jointly and prepare engaging tasks and activities that children enjoy. Children's creative development is especially well catered for, with a very wide range of activities to stimulate their imagination and encourage make-believe play. Provision for outdoor play, although satisfactory, does not reflect the same quality. The cramped outdoor space limits opportunities for children to engage in energetic and purposeful play. Nonetheless, adults move seamlessly between their roles as educators, carers and play-partners to ensure that children are supported well in both adult-directed and child-initiated activities, so they develop as confident and happy learners.

The children learn in a safe environment and all welfare requirements are fully met.

Partnerships with key workers and parents and carers are well established. The school's senior leaders have not had the same level of impact in the Early Years Foundation Stage as they have higher up the school. For example, systems to assess children's attainment on entry accurately are flawed and, without a secure baseline, staff are unable to measure progress from children's starting points accurately. The school has taken appropriate steps

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to strengthen leadership. Lead professionals working directly in the area have recently stepped up to take on responsibility for improving the quality of provision and outcomes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A third of parents and carers of pupils registered at the school responded to the questionnaire. This is typical of the response rate in primary schools nationally. The responses indicate their confidence and satisfaction with all that the school provides. A very few parents and carers raised individual concerns. These were discussed with the school while preserving the respondents' anonymity. One parent or carer noted that 'the headteacher is friendly, approachable and open to suggestions'. This concurs with inspection evidence, which endorses the school's view it has worked hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers with notable success.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wollaston Community 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 inspection team received 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 287 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	58	38	40	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	67	31	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	28	61	64	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	33	61	64	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	38	57	60	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	27	62	65	6	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	35	56	59	4	4	2	2
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)	40	42	51	54	0	0	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	40	54	57	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	54	57	9	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	34	50	53	11	12	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	48	51	43	45	1	1	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	56	41	43	0	0	1	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



11 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wollaston Community Primary School, Wellingborough NN29 7SF

Thank you for your contribution to your school's recent inspection. Special thanks go to those of you who completed questionnaires for us or spoke directly with inspectors. We learnt a lot about the school from these activities and watching you at work and play. We were impressed with your politeness and good manners.

Just as you do in assembly and in class, we investigated 'what makes you successful' and found that yours is a good school. We were struck immediately by the warm, welcoming atmosphere and attractive surroundings when we arrived. You study interesting topics and enjoy learning. This, together with your good behaviour, is contributing to your good achievement. Your teachers are good at their job. They prepare activities for you that help you to learn by doing practical work as well as listening. They make sure also that your work is pitched at the right level for you. Nevertheless, we think that some of you could reach even higher levels and we have asked your teachers set work for more-able pupils that is even more challenging.

Your school has moved from satisfactory to good since it was inspected three years ago. Your headteacher has made a huge contribution to this improvement with the help and support of the governing body, senior leaders and all of the staff. Your parents and carers have played their part too, through their encouragement and support for all that the school provides. The school is now ready to work towards excellence. We have asked that the space for outdoor play in the Reception class is improved and that the teachers measure the Reception Year children's progress more carefully. We noticed also that, although most of you attend school regularly, sometimes you take extra holidays in term-time and miss out on valuable learning time. So, we have asked the school to look at ways of reducing this by working with your parents and carers.

On behalf of the team I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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