

Wollaston Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121874
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314126
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2008
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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 on roll	
School	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Greatorex
Headteacher	Sally Hamson
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
School address	College Street Wollaston Wellingborough NN29 7SF
Telephone number	01933 664291
Fax number	01933 663025

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school serves the village of Wollaston and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds although there is a small number learning English as an additional language. The headteacher joined the school in January 2007, following several years of instability in the school's senior leadership. A permanent deputy headteacher was appointed in the term of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wollaston Community Primary is a satisfactory but improving school. Although there has been insufficient time for some changes to have had full impact, stable staffing, robust leadership and a clear vision for improvement are bringing new vitality and direction to the school after a long period of turbulence and decline. Staff have willingly embraced change and are working hard to meet higher expectations. Parents sense that the school is making progress. As one said, 'There has been a dramatic improvement in education and behaviour since September.' Although the headteacher provides excellent leadership, at other levels leadership and management remain satisfactory because it has taken time to establish a balanced senior leadership team. Not all subject leaders are yet fully effective, while only a few governors feel knowledgeable enough to challenge the school's leadership. Implementation of a system for checking pupils' progress has been a key development. This alerts staff to underperformance and provides information on pupils' needs and the effectiveness of teaching. More rigorous monitoring and better opportunities for staff training are enabling the school to improve the proportion of good teaching from its current satisfactory level. However, teachers do not always mark pupils' work with sufficient rigour; nor do they make sufficient use of individual learning targets to raise achievement or help pupils to understand how well they are doing. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception. In Years 1 to 6 the pace of learning is accelerating, backed by more rigorous assessment and higher expectations. However, achievement is stronger at present in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Standards continue to be broadly average at both Year 2 and Year 6, though with more variability at Year 6, reflecting a legacy of inconsistent teaching which has particularly affected the older pupils. Although specific interventions have had a positive effect on remedying weaknesses in writing in Year 6, a lower priority for science means that standards are likely to be lower this year than in 2007. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. However, the school does not yet consistently ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, are challenged to reach their potential.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school works satisfactorily with others to promote pupils' progress and well-being. Pupils attend school regularly. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Almost all behave well and enjoy coming to school. The satisfactory curriculum has been partly revised, making increased use of specialist teaching. Pupils support the good extra-curricular provision well. Pastoral care is good. The school is rigorous in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. The few pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress in acquiring oral skills in English. Provision for pupils who need additional support is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory capacity to build further upon the many recent changes.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Improved leadership and higher expectations are leading to more consistent teaching, better tracking of children's progress and a more stimulating environment for learning. This has resulted in children making better, and now satisfactory, progress this year. Last year, a significant number of children did not achieve the expected goals for learning, particularly in their social and emotional development. Current reception children are learning more briskly and most are on target to reach the early learning goals, with a small number exceeding the expected levels. There has been a marked improvement in their social and emotional

development, although areas such as writing and calculation are not yet as strong. In response, the school is focusing more on these aspects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good elements. Good relationships ensure that children are well cared for and that they are confident and independent. They are guided well to activities that will also help them learn. However, planning, although satisfactory, does not focus enough on individual needs. The curriculum covers all the areas of learning effectively. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, so that the progress of the older and more able pupils is more rapid and consistent, leading to higher standards by Year 6, especially in science.
- Make sure that teachers' marking is linked closely to pupils' targets so that pupils understand how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that leadership of the school is fully effective at all levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. Although more consistent teaching and better checks on pupils' progress are leading to good progress in Years 1 and 2, this positive momentum has not yet had time to push up standards at the end of Year 2. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 remains erratic, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and though satisfactory overall, is not yet sufficiently consistent to underpin a significant rise in standards. Accumulated deficits in learning are greatest for the older pupils and there is much ground to make up. Even so, standards in writing in Year 6, below average in 2007, show a significant improvement, particularly for higher attainers, because of the current focus on pupils' writing. Improvements in English, however, are not matched in science where pupils' scientific knowledge, especially for higher attaining pupils, is a weaker aspect of their understanding at present. Pupils who need additional support achieve satisfactorily as their needs are identified accurately and they are supported satisfactorily. The school plans to develop provision for able and gifted pupils. Year 6 targets in English and mathematics were largely met in 2007, other than for higher attainers in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and relate confidently to adults. They attend regularly, enjoy lessons and behave well. The training of pupils as 'buddies', backed by an effective personal, social and health programme, ensures that they feel very safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Although pupils' spiritual and social development is good, their moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Their awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary Britain is limited. Pupils understand well the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and participate eagerly in physical activities. They contribute well to the school community through the school council and other posts of responsibility. Opportunities to engage with the wider community are more limited and not developed sufficiently well. Although fund raising supports skills that contribute to pupils' future economic well-being, this element is generally weaker, because basic literacy and numeracy skills are less consistently developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

More consistent approaches to planning, assessment and evaluation, and more effective monitoring, are having a positive effect on teaching so that it is typically at least satisfactory. Relationships are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. This has a positive impact on pupils' readiness to learn. Teaching assistants give effective support to individuals who need additional help. However, better teaching has not yet had a consistent impact on the learning of the older pupils. There has been too little focus on the rigorous teaching of science in the current year. The pace of lessons is sometimes rather slow and expectations of the rigour and quality of pupils' written work are not high enough. Planned work is inconsistently matched to pupils' differing needs, especially the more able, and this affects achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the areas of learning satisfactorily, prioritising aspects where children have achieved less well. The main school curriculum has been focused on English and mathematics. The school now aims to organise the curriculum more creatively so that many activities in Years 1 and 2 are structured around themes. It actively promotes higher standards through specialist teaching in, for example, French, dance, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The use of literacy and ICT skills across other subjects in Years 3 to 6 is not yet planned effectively, and subjects other than English and mathematics are not always covered to any great depth. Provision for pupils who need additional support ensures that the curriculum focuses on what they most need to learn. Extra-curricular opportunities are good, with residential visits enhancing pupils' personal development well. There is little specific provision for academically gifted pupils and this is a recognised priority.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare well. The school has satisfactory links with external agencies. Teaching assistants ensure that pupils' welfare needs are met effectively and that they make satisfactory progress in their learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Whilst new tracking systems enable staff to monitor pupils' progress closely, individual improvement targets are not used consistently and not all pupils are aware of their targets. Teachers' marking does not explicitly reflect these targets or pupils' progress towards them. As a result, pupils are seldom aware of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear focus on rooting out underachievement and raising standards. Her strong leadership, enthusiasm and energy have been a catalyst for a well-motivated staff to contribute to improvement. A detailed tracking system has begun to identify more quickly those pupils falling behind, while other initiatives are having a positive effect on raising standards

in, for example, writing. The senior leadership team is new and recently appointed subject leaders have not yet developed their roles fully. Monitoring of teaching is rigorous, but, until recently, has largely been undertaken by the headteacher. The governing body has seen many changes. Whilst the chair of governors has a good grasp of the issues facing the school, most governors are only just gaining the knowledge of the school to enable them to challenge, as well as support, its leadership. The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is sound, with a clear link to development planning.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

31 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wollaston Community Primary School, Wollaston, NN29 7SF

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for talking to us so confidently. We realise that you are proud of your school and of the work you do. You look after each other well. Bearing in mind all the changes it has had, we felt that Wollaston Community Primary is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, school.

- The main things that we found are these.
- You behave well in lessons and work hard.
- The teaching is satisfactory and you make steady progress; however, some teachers are challenging you with harder work and this is helping you to raise your standards more quickly.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well, and you understand how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise.
- The curriculum is satisfactory, but the extra-curricular activities are good.
- The headteacher makes sure the school runs smoothly at present and knows what to do to improve it still further.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better.

- Make sure that the older pupils, particularly those who learn quickly, make faster progress so that they reach higher standards, especially in science.
- Make sure that teachers' marking is closely linked to your targets so that you know how you can improve your work.
- Ensure that all the school leaders take an active part in helping the school to improve further so you learn even better.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead inspector