

Wrestlingworth C of E VC Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109609
Local Authority	Bedfordshire
Inspection number	310036
Inspection date	6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gillian Ram
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Curry
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2003
School address	Church Lane Wrestlingworth Sandy SG19 2EU
Telephone number	01767 631249
Fax number	01767 631249

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a rural school, which draws its pupils from Wrestlingworth and surrounding villages. Attainment on entry to Reception varies significantly from year to year and as cohorts are very small, no general pattern is evident. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is broadly average. The number of pupils identified with additional needs is similar to other schools, but a higher than usual proportion has a statement of special educational need. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Since 2005, the headteacher has run this school jointly with Dunton Lower School. The school has the Healthy School Special Award for work on developing a school garden and the Activemark, in recognition of its work in promoting physical activity.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Whatever their starting points, pupils make excellent progress and reach exceptionally high standards in their work by the end of Year 4. There is an established trend of high standards and current overall attainment is very high. Standards in reading and mathematics are exceptionally high. In writing, attainment is above average but is not fully developed for a few pupils. Pupils achieve very high standards in other subjects too, including information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, art and music.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils behave very well, both in class and around school, and show excellent attitudes towards learning. They consider the school safe and interesting, and consequently really enjoy being there. Attendance is above average. Parents are pleased with the level of care shown. They comment positively on how their children enjoy being in school and how those new to the school mid-term are made to feel welcome.

The quality of education is excellent. Classes are small and teachers and other adults working in class know pupils very well. Tasks are challenging for pupils at all levels of attainment and for different ages in the mixed-age classes, so all pupils make the best possible progress. Although there is a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, there is also a high level of attention given to providing pupils with a rich and varied curriculum, with a strong emphasis on creative subjects and on physical development. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE) is strong and plays a major role in supporting their excellent personal development. Care and guidance; pastoral care and the level of academic guidance pupils receive, are exceptionally good. The school works particularly effectively with others to make sure pupils progress very well and are properly cared for. Provision for pupils who receive additional literacy and numeracy support is outstanding and so they achieve extremely well.

The school is extremely well led and managed by the headteacher, the senior teacher and the governors. Some parents do not like the arrangement of sharing their headteacher, but when she is working at the other school, Wrestlingworth is left in the very capable hands of the senior teacher, who is in school full time and provides high levels of continuity in leadership and management. The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There were many important issues to address at that time and these have all been dealt with and are now strong features. School self-evaluation provides a deep insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses and there are very good plans to move the school further forwards. In view of the sustained high academic standards, improvement since the previous inspection, excellent teamwork and accurate school self-evaluation, the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get an exceptionally good start to their education in Reception. Children make excellent progress and by the time they transfer to Year 1, most have reached the goals nationally expected at the end of the Foundation Stage and are working comfortably at National Curriculum level. Children make notable progress in their personal, social and emotional development, because of the exceptional level of care and because they are encouraged to develop their independence by making choices. They settle very well into class routines, behaviour is very

good and children learn very well alongside others. Curriculum planning is excellent; the balance between taught activities and those that children choose for themselves ensures that their interest is maintained at high levels. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Because classes are small, the teacher monitors each individual child's progress very closely and, using her considerable knowledge of the levels at which each child is performing, is able to ensure all progress exceptionally well from their own starting points.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 4 so they match the exceptionally high levels in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is excellent and by the end of Year 4, year on year attainment is exceptionally high. In 2008 standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There were good reasons for the dip in standards in 2007 and levels of attainment have recovered to their usual above average levels again this year. There is a very positive picture at the end of Year 4, where standards in reading and mathematics have been exceptionally high over the last few years in terms of those nationally expected for pupils of this age. Standards in writing are above average and could be as high as reading and mathematics. Pupils who find learning more challenging make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. This is evident in the high quality relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves. Through the curriculum and other initiatives such as links with schools overseas, pupils have an excellent awareness of life in other cultures. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning. They are not afraid of challenge, which they take on very well and reach high standards across a range of subjects. They are very aware of how to stay physically fit and eat healthy. They feel safe in school and older pupils look after younger ones extremely well. All know who to approach for support when needed. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to school life. They take on important responsibilities and meet their commitments reliably. There are very close links with the local and overseas communities through well-established contacts. Pupils are prepared very well for the next stages in their education with very good core skills, such as literacy and numeracy, an excellent work ethic and lots of opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is excellent and teachers show a very good understanding of how to match work to pupils' needs in order to move them on rapidly. Expectations are consistently very high. Teachers aim at the higher age in mixed-age classes, effectively lifting and challenging younger pupils. Pupils' behaviour is managed extremely effectively so high quality behaviour and positive attitudes to learning ensure lessons progress smoothly. Teaching assistants are skilled, know

their pupils well and make a significant contribution to supporting the progress of pupils in their focus groups. Teaching styles are varied and teachers make lessons interesting in order to engage pupils' attention and enthusiasm to learn. Learning objectives are shared with pupils clearly, so they know what is expected. Times at the end of lessons or at appropriate points in a lesson, are used exceptionally well to review learning and to prepare pupils for the next steps. Pupils have excellent opportunities to assess the quality of their own work and that of other pupils, which they do very well. Marking of work is informative; it tells pupils what they do well and identifies areas for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school makes particularly good arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy through an outstanding curriculum. There are very good arrangements to help pupils at all levels of attainment identified as needing a little extra support. In addition to focusing on developing pupils' core skills, there are very good curriculum arrangements to develop their personal, creative and physical skills. The curriculum is organised on a topic approach, which links subjects in a meaningful way and adds relevance to learning. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed effectively through other subjects such as history, geography, science. There is a very strong emphasis on the arts. Art and design, technology, music and drama, for example, all carry a high profile. There is very good provision for physical education. Curriculum enrichment is excellent. An exciting and extensive range of visits and visitors add greatly to pupils' interest in learning. These are highly relevant to learning and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding very well, including their multicultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Both pastoral care and academic guidance are outstanding. All safeguarding procedures, including those for health and safety, risk assessments and child protection are fully in place. The school goes out of its way to provide exceptionally well for pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special talents, and provides opportunities to develop them fully. Assessment procedures and academic guidance are thorough and robust. Pupils understand academic targets extremely well and know how to improve their work. They are given excellent opportunities to think about their own progress in lessons and how well they understand work. This process helps them to appreciate what they do well and how they can do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management at all levels are excellent. The school constantly reviews and improves its provision. The headteacher works exceptionally well with other staff and governors. Teamwork is strong; the headteacher motivates staff and empowers them to fulfil their roles extremely effectively. There are clear roles within the management structure. All staff are involved in monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision within their own areas of responsibility. They contribute to the whole school's self-evaluation and development planning, both of which are of high quality. Targets set for pupils' achievement and for staff performance are challenging and contribute directly to the school's improving profile. Governors are extremely effective. They are organised well and work in close collaboration with the school.

They provide high levels of support and challenge. High quality leadership and management are reflected in the excellent quality and quantity of resources in this school, which are extraordinarily good for a school of its size.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

9 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wrestlingworth C of E VC Lower School

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed the time I spent meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you learn, speaking to you to find out what you think about the school and how you help to make it a success.

You go to an excellent school. All the staff work really well together to provide you with a high quality education. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care shown for you are all excellent. You make outstanding progress in lessons and reach exceptionally high standards in your work. You are very well prepared to go on to the next stages of your education.

You help a great deal by behaving really well, taking responsibility very seriously and trying hard to do your best. I was impressed by how you respond to challenge and are willing to have a go, however difficult a task. I was very pleased by the sensible way in which you learn, make friends with others and care about each other. You help to make others feel safe in school and enjoy being there. Those of you I spoke to enjoy school very much and find it interesting.

A lot has been done to improve your school since it was last inspected, but this does not mean that there is nothing left to do. I have asked staff and governors to look at ways of helping you to improve the quality of your writing so that it matches the exceptionally high standards in other subjects.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman Lead inspector