

Wellgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131661
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	341188
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Mrs Jane Hughes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Lowe
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Kirkman
Date of previous school inspection	January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons or part-lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, records of lesson monitoring, the school's 'developing excellence' plan, pupils' work, safeguarding records, school policies, 105 questionnaires from parents, 98 questionnaires from pupils and 42 questionnaires from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school raises pupils' attainment, particularly boys' writing
- how well the school uses assessment and monitoring information to support teaching and learning for all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of strategies to promote regular attendance for all pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership at all levels and key stages, in view of the many changes to staff and governors and reasons for fluctuating attainment by the end of Year 6
- pupils' awareness of diversity in British society.

Information about the school

This larger than average school draws pupils from a mixed area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are White British. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. A smaller than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provides up to 26 part-time Nursery places, both morning and afternoon. At the time of the inspection, there was one Reception class. A further intake is due in January 2010. The school has several external awards including Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Financial Management in Schools Standard.

There have been many staff changes since the last inspection, including nine new class teachers.

Wellgate Out of School club is managed by an outside provider in one of the school halls. It offers before and after-school care for up to 20 children between the ages of three and 11 each weekday from 07.30 to 09.00 and from 15.15 to 18.00. It was not subject to this inspection.

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

Wellgate Primary is a good school. The headteacher has maintained a keen focus on improvement throughout a prolonged period of staff changes, mainly due to the opportunities staff have to seek effective professional development and subsequent promotion. Senior leaders motivate the staff team to examine their practice very carefully and to check exactly how best to improve. As a result, the school has moved on apace since its last inspection, many aspects of its work have improved and there is a palpable sense of rigour and purpose associated with everything the school community tackles. Self-evaluation by senior leaders, staff and governors is accurate and highlights the most important areas to develop. These firmly entrenched characteristics demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Parents confirm that, 'We are constantly impressed with the dedication of the staff'.

The school continues to increase the rate of pupils' progress and the broadly average, and at times, above average standards they attain in English, mathematics and science. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully during the course of the year and have a good knowledge of their learning.

Key strengths of the school are pupils' exemplary behaviour and their detailed knowledge of how to stay safe. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what constitutes a risk to themselves or to others and they adopt safe practices. Older pupils can talk at length about how to avoid the potential pitfalls of new technologies, such as the internet and mobile telephones. Weaker areas of practice and provision include aspects of pupils' writing, the consistency of pitch and pace in some of the teaching, coupled with subsequent variations in the quality of pupils' work, and some limitations in the provision for outdoor learning and regard for elements of children's independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - ensuring they present work neatly and legibly, and are attentive to accurate spelling.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better by:

- raising teachers' expectations for all pupils in terms of the quality of their work, the standards they attain, and the pace at which they learn.
- Develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the opportunities for individual children to choose when to learn and play inside or outdoors
 - improving the organisation of provision for children's learning outdoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Pupils attain broadly average standards in English due mainly to the slower rate of improvement in pupils' writing. Pupils' attainment in science is also broadly average, but shows consistent improvement between year groups as pupils build well on their previous learning and respond to more regular opportunities to investigate and so develop their skills of scientific reasoning. Attainment in mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6. This overall picture of broadly average attainment represents good progress from pupils' starting points.

Pupils apply themselves very well to their learning and persevere with the tasks set, even when the challenge these offer is sometimes too great or not quite strong enough. Pupils' current work and test results show that they make careless spelling mistakes in their work and their handwriting is frequently difficult to read. Pupils do not consistently take enough care over the presentation of their work. These relative weaknesses dilute pupils' writing skills. Boys are closing the gap between their attainment in writing and that achieved by the girls. This is because they engage far more readily in the many appealing activities on offer in classrooms. For example, their imaginations are stimulated as they 'explore Tutankhamen's tomb', and seek treasure armed only with intrepid excitement and a battery powered torch. Pupils throughout the school enjoy a diverse range of role play and derive great pleasure in developing their communication skills this way. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as other pupils and sometimes even better as a result of early identification of their needs coupled with individual learning programmes and skilful support. This is also true for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Vulnerable pupils blossom due to the individual attention they receive and the trusting relationships with adults in the school. Pupils' excellent behaviour is evident in all they do throughout the school day and beyond. From the earliest age they take turns to speak and listen in lessons, they know right from wrong and have great respect for others. As a result, pupils are confident to tackle new work and contribute actively in lessons, for example when they performed poetry in Year 3 and acted out anti-bullying scenarios in Years 4 and 5.

Pupils value their school and local community and happily take on responsibilities. The school council represents their views well and is an effective vehicle for change. Pupils hold strong views about life in school and their local community and value consultation. For example, they discuss local traffic problems and possible solutions. Pupils also participate in healthy 'walk to school' weeks and almost two thirds enjoy a nutritious school lunch. The school is harmonious as younger and older pupils work well together. For example, they listen to each other's opinions, cooperate well in

teams or pairs and can reason with each other to resolve conflicts. Pupils confirm that adults help them to do this by being available to listen to any problems, but also enable pupils to decide how best to resolve issues. 'They do this because this is what we'll need to do for ourselves at our next school', they say. Pupils' attendance is average: the rate of persistent absence continues to fall. A small proportion of pupils miss some learning because their parents do not bring them to school regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment	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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strong working relationships between pupils and adults are a key feature of the successful teaching. Adults ensure that they regularly use discussions between pupils in lessons. This enables pupils to practise speaking, listening and organising their thoughts, as well as extending their ideas and problem solving. Teachers plan activities well to link pupils' learning across different subjects. Pupils in Year 2 linked their writing to a topic on the *Jurassic forest* while information and communication technology (ICT) was used to support a history lesson. Skilful teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and progress as they lead small groups or support individual pupils with specific needs so that all can engage fully in their learning. However, some inconsistencies remain and are relative weaknesses within this strong and still improving picture of teaching. The pitch of work to match pupils' abilities is sometimes incorrect: work is either too easy for higher attaining pupils or too hard for lower attainers. The pace of some lessons does not galvanise pupils to move on rapidly enough in their learning. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching well and ensure that good use is made of the detailed assessment information gathered by the school.

The curriculum is tailored well to pupils' interests and needs. Themes of 'sustainability' and 'enterprise' engage pupils' curiosity. Recycling and energy conservation are already important considerations within school. Throughout the school, adults encourage daily role play to promote pupils' speaking, listening and imaginative response. Good links continue to embed between subjects and pupils have purposeful and engaging reasons to write. Pupils are consulted about the curriculum and, increasingly, their views are taken into account. Teachers' planning builds systematically on key skills and encompasses theme days which are popular,

effective and add to pupils’ enjoyment. The vast variety of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities are a strength.

Parents and pupils alike view the school as a very caring and happy place. This is because:

- care and pupils’ safety are at the heart of the school’s work
- induction and transition arrangements support pupils well
- welcoming displays, cheery staff and bright, clean and well cared for learning environments entice pupils into school each day
- staff quickly identify vulnerable pupils and ensure that they receive the appropriate pastoral care to thrive in school
- teaching assistants provide effective support both inside and outside the classroom
- lunchtimes are happy social occasions with healthy choices and good relationships between pupils and lunchtime staff.

The school works very hard to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Support for individual families and mentoring are highly effective and there is also very good support for more vulnerable families. Even so, some parents persist in taking their children on holiday during term-time. The school regularly challenges and fines these parents.

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’]/[children’s] needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a strong steer to the school’s work and drives rapid improvement. Senior leaders enable the school to build on past successes and to work efficiently towards many of the ambitions thwarted in the past by too frequent staff changes. The whole school community embraces these new directions. Staff are keen to undertake professional development and are generous in the way they support and mentor their colleagues, sharing their expertise. There is true ‘team spirit’ evident throughout the staff.

The headteacher and staff enjoy a good relationship with the local community. They have a clear understanding of the various contexts within which the community operates, but do not formally monitor the impact of its work on community cohesion. Although pupils have many opportunities to work within the community, during fundraising, artistic and sporting events for example, pupils have a more limited awareness of the diversity of British society. Pupils’ global awareness is strong, however, as they learn to speak French and about the French culture from the Reception Year onwards. There are also established links with a Ugandan school for which the pupils of Wellgate raise funds. There is keen attention to the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination so that the needs of all pupils,

staff and parents are well considered. Pupils with physical disabilities are included in every aspect of school life and their classmates learn much from them. Firmly established partnerships contribute strongly to pupils' well-being, and to the attainment of the most vulnerable in particular, as interactions with outside agencies and parent support workers are highly effective.

Arrangements to safeguard pupils and to ensure their well-being are securely in place. These meet current government requirements. The governing body provides good levels of challenge and expertise, along with a wide variety of useful skills and experience. As a result, governors provide unstinting support for the school. They work effectively alongside senior leaders as they help to analyse what is working well, decide on priorities for improvement, and then monitor that these take place. However, they do not yet evaluate the impact of their own work. Many parents are fulsome in their praise of the school and its leadership. Typical comments refer to, 'A fabulous management team which is always available if you need to talk to anyone. Top marks from us for the school!'

These are the grades for the 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

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Increasingly, children arrive in school unable to look after their own personal needs. By the end of Reception, an increasingly large proportion of children is working at the levels expected for their age. Attainment has risen strongly in the last three years. However, these good levels of development were not the norm for pupils now in Key Stage 2, when they were five years old. Improvements are due to the more accurate assessments of children's skills on entry and exit and a more stimulating learning environment and range of experiences. Children's current achievements are consolidating a far firmer foundation for the development of basic skills in Year 1.

Children relate well to their key workers and this helps them to settle quickly into daily routines. Parents and carers comment on how much they appreciate the information they receive about how their children are getting on. Detailed and

regular observations of what children know, understand and can do ensure that the adults build up a clear picture of children’s learning. Children grow in confidence mainly because:

- adults take very good care of them, make them feel welcome and value their views
- there is an exciting range of activities to spark children’s curiosity
- staff provide strong role models in terms of attitudes and behaviour
- children’s views are sought and listened to by adults.

The senior leadership team monitors the Early Years Foundation Stage carefully and has prioritised the recent refurbishment of the two outdoor environments. This work continues. Although both areas provide a wide and exciting variety of activities that reflect all the areas of learning, more remains to be done to ensure that these spaces are used as effectively as possible. Provision outdoors is not as well organised as inside and children sometimes encroach on the activities of their classmates, particularly when riding bicycles or using other wheeled toys and vehicles. Children regularly engage in stimulating role play that generates a great deal of speaking and listening. However, children’s choice is somewhat limited because individuals do not regularly choose for themselves whether to learn and play inside or outdoors.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A large proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. They are very supportive of the school and most appreciate how well the school provides for their children. A few parents expressed concerns about a variety of issues. Inspectors investigated these concerns but found no evidence to uphold such criticisms. Inspection findings confirm many of the strengths identified by parents and carers. In particular, communication between the school and home is very effective and provides parents with a good view of school life, coupled with a very clear view of how well their children are performing in school. Some parents commented, ‘We are extremely impressed with the level of communication between the school and parents’.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wellgate 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 366 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	60	37	35	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	63	36	34	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	41	58	55	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	45	53	50	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	45	53	50	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	41	54	51	7	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	48	52	50	2	2	1	1
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)	34	32	61	58	1	1	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	36	60	57	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	38	49	47	11	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	33	57	54	8	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	36	34	57	54	6	6	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	43	53	50	6	6	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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>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.



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wellgate Primary School, Barnsley, S75 6HR

Thank you for all your kindness and help when I inspected your school recently with my colleagues. We all enjoyed chatting to you and listening to your views. This letter tells you what we found out about your school.

Your headteacher and all the staff do a good job. Wellgate is a good school and you are rightly proud to be part of such a happy learning community. You told us how much you enjoy school and we saw that in the way you quickly settle down to work and try very hard in your lessons. You all behave beautifully and work together well in pairs and groups. All these good qualities help you achieve well and make good progress. You can explain a great deal about how to stay safe whether you are in school, using computers or when you are at home or out having fun. All the adults look after you very well. We were very impressed with all the different clubs you can go to – 'dodge ball' sounds great fun!

Part of our job is to see what your school could do better. We have asked your headteacher and all the staff to help you to improve your writing by making sure you spell accurately and that your handwriting is neat and easy to read. We also want all the teachers to give you work that is neither too easy nor too difficult and that you get on with it quickly. Finally, we have asked staff to organise the outdoor learning spaces in Nursery and Reception so that the children can make the most of the time they spend there and also let them all choose for themselves when they want to learn in the classroom or outside.

You can help by always checking your work carefully for spelling mistakes and taking much more care with your handwriting.

Keep enjoying school, attending every day, and having fun!

Yours faithfully

Jane Hughes
Lead Inspector

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