

West Buckland Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123712
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314684
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicki Taylor
Headteacher	Helen Macgregor
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	West Buckland Wellington TA21 9LD
Telephone number	01823 663376
Fax number	01823 660329

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

West Buckland Community Primary School is much smaller than most schools. Only a small proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and none of these is currently identified by the school as needing outside support or a statement of special educational need. Almost all the pupils come from a White British background. Very few speak English as an additional language. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school has been through a period of significant turbulence over the last 18 months due to staff changes and long-term absences as a result of illness. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Buckland Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school has some particular strengths in the provision it makes for pupils' personal and social education, and for those children in the Foundation Stage (the Reception Year). Links with other schools and the local community are also strong. Attendance is excellent and pupils say they enjoy school very much. However, the school has been through a period of instability outside its control, with temporary appointments and staff sickness. This has resulted in a slowing of pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and achievement is now satisfactory overall.

The new headteacher has had to face many challenges since her appointment. She is leading the school well and has identified what needs to be done to improve progress. She has introduced an effective assessment and record keeping system and has laid the foundations for a helpful programme of academic guidance for pupils. However, other management systems are not as secure. Teaching is satisfactory. Some is good but there are many inconsistencies between classes. There is no recorded consensus of what the school defines as good practice in teaching and learning, and no system whereby the good practice in some lessons can become more widespread. Apart from the statutory performance management, much recent monitoring of teaching has been informal. The academic curriculum is being revised but as yet there are inconsistencies between approaches in different classes.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good idea about how to stay safe, as a child in Year 1 demonstrated when discussing pushes and pulls. She pointed out that you must always 'hold mummy's hand when crossing the road'. Adults in the school have a high level of commitment to keeping pupils safe and healthy, and the school gained the Healthy School award in July 2007. Pupils have a good understanding of rights and responsibilities, and council members are actively involved in improving the school. Pupils are being encouraged to be more independent in their learning and they value the one-to-one guidance sessions that have been introduced. However, older pupils do not all understand how well they are doing, or for what they should be aiming.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives with effective basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in English and mathematics are generally above average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. However, for the past five years, pupils have entered the key stage with above average skills. Taking their starting points into account, progress is satisfactory, but recently pupils have made slower progress through the key stage in mathematics than in English. Current Year 2 pupils have also made sound progress through their key stage, but the most able have made slower progress than the pupils of middle or lower ability.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children get a good start when they join the school in the Foundation Stage. They are currently taught in a class with Year 1 pupils but carry out age-appropriate activities and they receive good teaching. Materials are chosen carefully to interest them; for example, during the inspection, they were encouraged to say a sentence about a photo of themselves doing science the day before. They are well supported. As a result, they make good progress. The curriculum

for children in the Foundation Stage is good, but is rightly being fine tuned to take account of exactly what individuals in each year group can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in mathematics through Key Stage 2 and improve the rate of progress of the more able pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the consistency of good teaching through coming to a shared understanding of what is required in the school and implementing formal regular monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Improve pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and the use of individual targets.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Year groups are small, so the attainment of the pupils when they start the school varies from year to year. Last year, pupils entered Reception with skills slightly below those expected for their age. By the end of the year, their attainment was a little above average. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Results for 2007 show that last year's Year 2 made good progress through Key Stage 1, especially good in reading and mathematics. The more able made much slower progress in writing. The current Year 2 have made satisfactory progress through the key stage. Progress in reading and mathematics is slower than last year, though overall progress in writing has improved. The most able have again made slower progress than other groups of pupils.

Results for 2005 and 2006 show that the Year 6 pupils made good progress through Key Stage 2. The 2007 results reflected satisfactory progress, but the rate of progress in mathematics was lower than for previous year groups. The current Year 6 have made satisfactory progress through the key stage, but their progress in mathematics, while broadly satisfactory, has been significantly slower than in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to each other and the staff, and behaviour is good. A few parents suggested that bullying was sometimes an issue but this was not the view of the pupils interviewed. Some pupils are 'playground leaders' whose job it is to involve everyone in games, and they say this works well. The pupils contribute to the school in a wide range of other ways. Some pupils have worked with other schools in the 'student voice' conference. They also make a significant contribution to the village community through work with the Women's Institute, the church and village events. They have a good moral and social understanding, and have explored the rights of children worldwide to an education. Though collective worship only takes place four days a week, spiritual development is sound. Pupils' cultural development is also sound, and the school recognises that the pupils have limited opportunities to experience the multicultural world in modern Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching that pupils have received has been affected by factors outside the school's control. As a result, learning and progress have been satisfactory, even though some of the teaching is good. During the inspection, teachers used resources well to create interesting activities. There was some effective use of 'discussion partners' to encourage talk and reflection, and lesson objectives were sometimes discussed effectively with pupils so that they knew where they were heading. However, there is a lack of consistency. For example, not all staff use lesson objectives in this way, and there is no agreed marking system in consistent use. There is no formal school agreement about what teachers should be doing to ensure good learning. A start has been made by encouraging teachers to observe each other's lessons, but formal monitoring is not regular enough to ensure good practice is shared and teaching is more consistently good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets pupils' personal development needs well but is less consistent in meeting pupils' academic needs. Planning is currently being improved, with recommended changes to the primary framework for literacy and numeracy being gradually implemented. The intention is also to develop a curriculum that supports pupils' skills and makes the most of the ways they like to learn. However, changes are not yet being consistently put into practice through the school. There is good provision for ICT, and the school provides a good number of after-school clubs and activities. Visitors and visits out, such as days at the local secondary school, enhance the curriculum. Financial and enterprise skills are developed well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support are good, but academic guidance is still being developed and is as yet satisfactory. The few pupils with particular needs, such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a need to be helped to access lessons taught in English, are supported sensitively and well so that they make progress on a par with their peers. Safeguarding requirements are met and pupils value recent innovations such as the 'worry box' through which they can ask for help. They love the way they are consulted and have 'a chance to say how we like to learn'. They feel they know how well they are doing but this is based on broader discussion rather than shared information about actual National Curriculum levels. They have group targets but individual targets are not yet widespread. Pupils are well supported at time of transfer by good links with the playgroup and other schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher is well aware what needs to be done, and is leading the staff team with sensitivity. Though monitoring of teaching has been largely informal, it has been sufficient to allow the headteacher to build up an accurate analysis of quality. Setting up the new assessment system was an urgent priority and it now provides the necessary information on which to frame

a new development plan. Writing has been improved through the work of the headteacher and literacy coordinator. The strength of the leadership means the school is in many ways well set to improve, but rapid improvement will not be realised until the underlying management systems are strengthened. The capacity to improve is currently satisfactory. The school development plan is too short term and the headteacher is currently drawing up a three-year programme.

Governance is sound. Support to the school is good, and the governors are now acting as critical friends, but their monitoring has not previously been systematic enough. There have also been many changes at governing body level, with four different clerks in the last year. The governors are aware that some statutory requirements are only partially met, for example, reporting of the school's work on provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and race equality, as well as the partial omission of collective worship, and they are working systematically to ensure that changes are made.

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Buckland Community Primary School, Wellington, TA21 9LD

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited the school yesterday. Particular thanks to those of you who gave us your views about the school and your work. We think you are getting a satisfactory education, even though there have been a lot of changes of teachers and some staff have been ill. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school, which is really good.

We were impressed by your politeness and good behaviour. We were also impressed by the way you help around school, and the way you have learned how to keep yourselves healthy and safe. We think the youngest pupils get a good start in Reception.

Your headteacher and staff are very keen to make the school even better and we have asked them to work on three things:

- We want the younger ones who are good at things like English and maths to make progress more quickly. We also want the older ones to make quicker progress in maths.
- There need to be more regular checks on teaching to help make it even better.
- We want you to be told more clearly how well you are doing and what your targets are. You can help by asking about this if you are not sure.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary Lead inspector