

Wittering Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110755
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	310409
Inspection dates	31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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	282
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Cartwright
Headteacher	Mr R Laurie
Date of previous school inspection	2–5 June 2003
School address	Church Road Wittering Peterborough PE8 6AF
Telephone number	01780 782336
Fax number	01780 782336

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: why pupils make better progress in mathematics than in English, the rate of pupils' progress and how successfully new pupils are inducted when they join the school. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work, scrutinising school documentation and records of pupils' achievement and progress. Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Wittering Primary School is larger than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. The proportion known to qualify for a free school meal is below average.

The school serves the nearby Royal Air Force (RAF) base, the village and surrounding area. The school has an exceptionally high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the year. Only a third of pupils currently in Year 6 have spent their school lives at Wittering from the age of four. The school won a Rolls Royce special merit award in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wittering Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. It has outstanding aspects in pupils' personal development, the care and support for pupils and in the way that the school's leaders set a clear direction for improvement based on thorough investigations into trends and patterns in pupils' progress. The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff has helped to maintain the good performance of the school since the last inspection. Parents acknowledge how well their children are performing. Typical of their comments is, 'We have been consistently impressed by the standard of education and care which Wittering School provides.'

Pupils' achievement and progress are good from their many starting points. The school prepares pupils well for the future, which for many is their next primary school in the UK or abroad. Over the past two years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been above average at the end of Year 2, and continue to be so. At Key Stage 2, standards have shown a broadly similar pattern. In 2007, standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English. Pupils' greater success in mathematics is largely due to the school making changes two years ago to the way the subject is taught. Senior teachers have ensured since that time that pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum, and that work is well matched to their abilities. The result of these changes is that pupils have made better progress and standards in mathematics have risen.

In 2007, Year 6 pupils' writing standards were lower than those in reading. Boys were not performing as well as girls. In order to improve writing standards this year, senior staff have begun to emphasise the visual aspects of the curriculum more strongly, such as by using film clips, to interest boys more deeply in their work. So far this year, pupils' records of progress in Year 6 show that they are on course to reach higher standards in writing. Pupils are predicted to reach their above average targets in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils make good progress because the curriculum is well organised and teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations, such as of behaviour always being good. Pupils say that, 'teachers are strict, but nice.' Teachers help pupils to consolidate ideas well and model, for example, how to answer probability problems successfully in Year 6. The school deliberately plans the curriculum using national guidance, so that it has similarities with many other schools; hence, pupils have a better chance of settling in more easily if they move schools during their primary years. Pupils find lessons particularly interesting when they observe and investigate ideas at first-hand. Teachers have identified this area for further attention if standards in science are to rise further. In the recent past, pupils gained the Rolls Royce science award for a project about electronically sensing information, such as temperature and noise. It is clear that pupils took great interest in this aspect of their work and achieved exceptionally well.

A key area of the school's success, confirmed by parents, is the care and support the pupils receive when they join classes at different times during the year. The school

makes comprehensive assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do on entry. This means they soon settle to work that they can do, but it also challenges them. The highly inclusive atmosphere found in every year group ensures that pupils settle extremely well socially. One parent said, 'Wittering has made a fine art of service children being integrated into the school', which reflects the thoughts of many. The pupil-to-adult ratio is exceptionally good, and all pupils benefit from the extra attention they receive.

Pupils who find reading and writing difficult make good progress and most reach the expected national standards in Year 6. Their work is well matched to what they already know and challenges them with the next small step. Of the very few pupils who join the school with little or no English, by the time they leave the school they confidently take part in assemblies and speak good English. Teachers identify their linguistic needs quickly and provide suitable special programmes of work.

Leadership and management are good, and based on the past performance of change for the better, the school has a good capacity to improve further. The headteacher and senior staff monitor teaching and learning and give useful feedback to teachers to help them improve. These checks contribute significantly to the high level of consistency in what the school offers and reflect the exceptionally clear direction from senior staff. Staff work together in teams so that expertise is shared effectively across the school and changes happen consistently in all years. Governors take a close interest in what happens in school and ask the leadership about what it is doing and why. The school is spacious, very well equipped and provides good value for money.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They have an excellent knowledge of how to stay safe because the school offers such a varied programme for personal, health and social education. Pupils behave extremely well and make the most of what the school offers because it is expected and because they find school life interesting. They look forward to school and bring a great sense of goodwill and desire to be part of everything. Hence, attendance is above average. Teachers foster these qualities very effectively by involving pupils in many aspects of school life and in projects, such as those with European schools. Although the school does not have a pupil council, their voice is heard. The school has good links, for example, with the RAF and community police officer, who bring their expertise to the school for pupils' benefit.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many children's attainment on entry to Reception is lower than that expected nationally. Through consistent and well-informed teaching, most leave Reception at the standards expected of five-year-olds nationally, and a minority exceeds them. Teachers use a wide variety of ways of teaching. They repeat letter sounds and names through games, and children's progress is good. Children were observed drawing, cutting and gluing finger puppets. In no time, once they had finished making them, they created stories for their characters with their classmates. Children are exceptionally helpful to one another and show great enjoyment in what they do. They grow used to new routines quickly, such as working on their own and making

decisions during activities. The provision is well managed. Hence, children feel safe and secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop boys' writing by providing greater visual stimulation, so that they take more interest in tasks.
- Improve pupils' standards and progress in science, by providing a greater focus on first-hand investigation and experimentation in lessons.

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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?	2
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 effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards reached by learners ¹	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
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	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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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



1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wittering Primary School, Wittering, PE8 6AF

It was good to meet so many of you and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the group I met after lunch and to those of you I joined at lunchtime. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in my full report. Here are some of the good features of your school:

- You make a good start to your schooling in Reception.
- You make good progress with your work in Years 1 to 6.
- The headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers and other adults care for you so well and help you to learn.
- You have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe.
- You work hard and behave extremely well.
- Those of you who have joined the school recently have settled quickly into new routines.

Your teachers have noticed that there are two areas that could be better, and I agree:

- Boys, you need to continue trying hard to improve the content of your writing.
- Teachers are going to let you all investigate and experiment more in science.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry
Lead inspector