

North Walkden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105922
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	377324
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Pennington
Headteacher	Anne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
School address	Worsley Road North Walkden Worsley Manchester M28 3QD
Telephone number	01204 571039
Fax number	01204 579424
Email address	northwalkden.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Drake
Ian Wellens

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by seven different teachers, plus two sessions promoting pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds. They also heard nine pupils read individually. The inspectors held meetings with school staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a group of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' attainment and progress, as well as leadership and management. When planning the inspection, the inspectors found no responses made by parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors took into account questionnaires returned by pupils, members of staff and 47 parents and carers.

Information about the school

North Walkden is smaller than the average-size primary school. The number of pupils on roll is rising. Most pupils are White British but a small proportion belong to a range of minority ethnic groups and an even smaller proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is above average. The school offers inclusion places for pupils with statements of special educational needs from across the authority. The school meets the current floor standard. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a full-time Nursery class and a Reception class.

The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2010 as its fifth headteacher in eight years. The deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2011. She manages the school for 50% of the time when the headteacher carries out her duties at another local school. Since the previous inspection, there have also been other changes to the teaching staff. In 2011, the school gained the intermediate International School award, the silver Eco School award, and Investors in Families status.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Owing to the dynamism and well-judged actions of the new leadership team, it is also a school that is rapidly improving. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory but, over the past year, the progress made by most pupils has speeded up so that it is now good. Attainment in English and mathematics are broadly average but there is room for it to improve. Attainment in writing, a major focus over the past year, has risen well and in the 2011 tests for Year 6 pupils it was above average. The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not quickened because the provision there is no better than satisfactory.
- Pupils enjoy their time at North Walkden because they find lessons fun and, as one said, 'there is always something going on'. The great majority of teaching is of good or better quality, with clear learning objectives that build on pupils' prior work, good relationships and interesting activities. Teaching assistants effectively extend the learning of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and they behave well. The school operates as an orderly, happy community where pupils are polite, look after each other and make visitors feel very welcome. Pupils play together amicably and collaborate well in lessons.
- The strong senior leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and those areas in need of development, such as the arrangements to assess and track pupils' progress. In a short time, leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' progress, the learning environment, the curriculum and the school's partnership with parents and carers. In the words of a parent, 'The school has turned a corner.'

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to above average in English and mathematics, by:
 - increasing the regularity with which pupils' attainment is assessed and the use made of the information this provides
 - strengthening the reading skills of pupils in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that all teaching is of good or better quality
 - making better use of information and communication technology as a tool for pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of provision, and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - ensuring that adults capitalise on opportunities to promote children's learning and make best use of the wide range of available resources
 - establishing effective systems to collect evidence of, assess and record children's skills development
 - ensuring that children develop a good understanding of the links between letters and sounds.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. This is because unsettled leadership and staffing in the past have led to gaps in pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science that are only now being filled. Over the past three years, attainment at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average as it is currently. Pupils now make good progress in lessons because they listen well to teachers and each other, make good use of available time and generally take care with the presentation and content of their work. Pupils are becoming adept at evaluating, and considering ways to improve, the quality of their own and others' work. They take good account of others' suggestions and ideas. In the positive and supportive environment, mistakes are seen as a normal part of learning. Older pupils automatically refer to a dictionary or thesaurus to extend their vocabulary. In an English lesson, Year 4 pupils collaborated exceptionally well, drawing on their prior learning in geography and the inspiration provided by the earlier part of the lesson, to order their thinking before beginning to write a description of their imaginary time in an Aboriginal village. Parents and carers rightly consider that their children are now making good progress and that the school meets their needs well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities make good progress alongside their peers due to good quality support. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also progress well. In 2011, this group of pupils in Year 6 reached attainment levels above the national average in English and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics.

Children's skills on entry to the nursery are generally below those expected for their age. Their progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children form generally good relationships, are compliant and they concentrate suitably on self-chosen activities. However, their thinking, understanding, knowledge and skills are not extended through their play because of a lack of timely adult intervention, suggestions or questioning. Children's understanding of the links between letters and sounds is insecure. This means

that Year 1 pupils do not get off to a good start and consequently their reading skills are below average. For example, some still confuse 'b' and 'd' and are not confident with sounds such as 'ai', formed with two letters. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is broadly average. Throughout the school, pupils' singing is of good quality. Their artwork, including textiles based on Indian themes and paintings in the style of Henri Rousseau, enhances the learning environment and effectively supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Quality of teaching

Pupils say that their learning has improved over the past year because there is 'more challenge, the work is more interesting and teachers are more enthusiastic.' Parents and carers are agreed that their children are taught well.

Teaching is characterised by good organisation, good relationships, good levels of challenge and clarity of expectations for what different groups should achieve. Curriculum planning ensures that pupils now develop their skills in a systematic way. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace with pupils actively involved in moving their learning forward. Most questioning skilfully draws out pupils' prior knowledge and teachers often invite pupils to extend their answers, in order to develop their thinking and communication skills. However, such good practice is not evident in every classroom. Good relationships abound and frequent use of talking partners or small group work successfully encourages pupils to reflect on their learning and share their ideas, enhancing their spiritual and social development. Most teachers and teaching assistants move well around the classroom when pupils are working to clarify any misconceptions about, for example, the value of digits, or to provide further challenge. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher demonstrated her excellent knowledge of individuals' different abilities as she modelled a possible opening sentence of a newspaper report for one group and encouraged another to consider the correct use of a semi-colon. Teaching generally uses information and communication technology (ICT) well to provide visual or aural stimuli for learning, and older pupils are skilled at, for example, creating animations, but pupils have too few opportunities to use this medium for themselves as a tool for learning. Marking effectively helps pupils to understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work but the school is at an early stage of developing the use of targets for pupils' learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the systems to monitor the development of children's skills are not yet sufficiently rigorous. Teachers' plans outline different activities but the teaching is not closely enough adapted to individuals' different needs in order to enable children to make better than satisfactory progress. Adults organise interesting activities indoors and outside, for example, the wearing of 'alien' masks, so that children enjoy their learning. However, they do not make the best use of resources nor intervene skilfully with questions or suggestions, especially during independent activities, to move children's learning forward at a greater pace. In sessions teaching the use of letters, the articulation of the sounds made by different letters is not always sufficiently precise to help children's ready understanding of the links between the two.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically good, as confirmed by those pupils spoken with and by their responses to the inspection questionnaire. Instances of bullying or other unkindness are very rare and dealt with swiftly. Pupils develop a strong moral sense. Those who are likely

to be more vulnerable describe the school as 'kind' because adults and the other pupils are friendly. The very good behaviour of the great majority of pupils in lessons makes a strong contribution to their good progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children share, take turns and follow routines appropriately. Occasionally, despite strong, positive behaviour management by adults, a small minority of younger pupils behave in ways that impact on their own and others' learning. Pupils understand how to deal with risk, for example, when using the internet or the school's climbing wall, and the need to follow instructions when on educational visits. Older pupils take pride and pleasure in helping around school, and show empathy with younger ones, for example, ensuring that they have had time to eat their lunch. Attendance levels are average, with good improvements during the current year in both attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's astute evaluation and prioritisation of the school's strengths and areas in most need of improvement, together with her skilful management have forged a strong sense of teamwork among staff and galvanised them into effective action. Morale is high and the rate of pupils' progress is increasing. The senior leadership team, of headteacher, deputy headteacher and business manager, has complementary skills and high ambitions for pupils which are driving forward improvement at a good pace. The arrival in April 2012 of a newly appointed leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage will complete the team. Members of the governing body are well-informed and influential in, for example, gaining funding to improve the accommodation. Capacity to improve is good. Extensive monitoring of the quality of provision and of pupils' work takes place. Pupils' progress is tracked. However, at neither whole-school nor subject level do leaders assess pupils' attainment with sufficient regularity or analyse it with enough attention paid to the outcomes for different groups. This means that they cannot pinpoint particular strengths or weaknesses with precision so as to focus future actions to very best effect.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well, as evidenced by the reducing attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and all pupils nationally. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is becoming more streamlined and effective. The arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and staff have good access to further training, including through the school's strong partnerships with other local schools. The good curriculum has been successfully restructured so that, as of this year, pupils develop their skills in science and mathematics sequentially and with no gaps. It also promotes successfully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through their eco activities and links with a school in Kenya. Through the introduction of family learning days, coffee mornings and its open door policy, the school's partnership with parents and carers has improved so that they are increasingly engaged in their children's learning. Their satisfaction with the school is demonstrated by comments such as, 'The school has given my child confidence, the ability to build on their qualities and help to support their weaknesses. All staff are very approachable, and the care and nurture of each child is amazing.'

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Walkden Primary School, Manchester, M28 3QD

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Through talking with us you helped us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at North Walkden. We agree with you that it is a friendly school where, as one of you said, 'there is always something going on'. We have judged that it is a satisfactory school which is rapidly improving.

It was good to hear you say that you think that your learning has improved over the past year because there is 'more challenge, the work is more interesting, there are more teaching assistants and teachers are more enthusiastic.' We agree that the teaching is mostly of good quality because it helps you to be clear about what you are expected to learn, and the lessons build well one upon the other. Most of you make good progress in lessons but your achievement over a longer period is only satisfactory mainly because the provision was weaker in the past. Children in Nursery and Reception enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress. However, the adults do not have a clear enough idea of how well different children are developing their skills and they don't always involve children enough in discussing what they are learning. We have asked the school's leaders to work hard to improve this.

You form good relationships and the great majority of you behave well all the time. You are polite and very helpful and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe. Your attendance and punctuality have improved well this year. Congratulations and we hope you keep it up! The school's leaders have helped the school to improve a lot whilst they have been in charge. We are sure that you appreciate the new windows and the lively displays of your beautiful artwork. We know that your writing has improved a great deal and we are sure that you could achieve higher standards in English overall and in mathematics. We have suggested ways in which the school can help you to do this. We are confident that you will rise to the challenge. This letter comes with our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.