

Windermere Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117217
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379374
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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 of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Gibson
Headteacher	Bozena Lapinski
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Additional inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the responses from the 93 questionnaires from parents and carers, and 86 from pupils. Inspectors looked at school documentation, including its improvement plan, tracking of pupils' progress and local authority and other external evaluation of the school's provision. They looked also at teachers' planning, safeguarding policies, samples of pupils' work, as well as talking to pupils about their learning experiences.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group being of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is well above that found nationally. Very few, however, are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average. Their needs link most often to language, communication or behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. There is a much greater level of movement into and out of the school than is seen in most schools. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Windermere is a good school. Good leadership and management and a persistent drive for improvement mean that attainment has risen and progress has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- As a result of robust tracking and targeted interventions, different groups of pupils perform equally well. This makes an important contribution to their quality of learning and allows them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Staff monitor pupils' progress effectively through regularly scrutiny of the pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed lessons with creative teaching strategies, which pupils enjoyed thoroughly and valued. Pupils are not always clear about their learning targets and because marking is not consistently developmental; they are not always sure how to improve their work.
- Good behaviour is a strong feature of the school and pupils, parents and carers are proud of their school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe, and parents and carers expressed their appreciation for the way the school cares for the individual needs of each and every child.
- The headteacher is skilled and committed and, with her senior leaders, has articulated a clear vision for continued improvement. Consequently, teamwork is strong and staff collaborate with colleagues, both in school and beyond, to improve practice.
- Although leaders have improved the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection, there is still more to do in developing outdoor learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the next steps they need to take in their learning by:
 - improving target setting and marking so that it provides constructive feedback consistently
 - giving pupils time to respond to feedback at the start of lessons.
- Improve the provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - developing the range and quality of outdoor activities

- reviewing the organisation of these activities.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. National test data, the school's own analysis of current performance, and observations of learning in lessons confirm that pupils' progress is good and sometimes better. Attainment has risen over the last few years. From below-average starting points, pupils' attainment rises to broadly average by the time they leave Year 6. The progress of all pupils is tracked very carefully to ensure all groups achieve well. This applies particularly to pupils who move into the school partway through the school year. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those learning to speak English as an additional language, and those who are potentially vulnerable achieve well as a result of the good provision made for them in this very inclusive school. The school has taken effective steps to address the performance of girls in mathematics, which had dipped in Year 6 last year. Procedures have been put in place to make identification of girls' barriers to learning more precise and make it easier to track progress and ensure pupils receive exactly the support they need. Consequently, this weakness has been tackled successfully.

Children arrive in Reception Year with levels of development generally lower than national expectations for their age. Well-established routines help children settle quickly into the Reception Year. Although most children in the Reception class make good progress, opportunities are missed to extend children's learning because the activities in the outdoor area are not sufficiently challenging, well organised, or of good enough quality. There is a good focus on developing speaking and listening skills because staff, consistently, encourage children to speak with greater clarity and accuracy. Focused tasks for small groups are effective. Inspectors saw sessions on letters and sounds which are helping children to make good progress in gaining the skills needed for reading and writing.

Progress in reading is particularly good throughout the school. All groups of pupils currently in the school made good progress and a large minority made outstanding progress in reading skills in the summer term. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading has, in recent years, been broadly average. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate that they can interpret and talk well about the texts they are reading. Older pupils read well and the well-focused guided reading sessions throughout the school have contributed to the purposeful learning seen during the inspection. Well-developed book corners in all classrooms are appreciated by pupils, who were eager to discuss the books they were reading.

Quality of teaching

There is an effective whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning through support, challenge and coaching. Teaching and learning have improved as a consequence, resulting in steady improvements in pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers plan carefully to build on pupils' learning both in lessons and over time.

Generally, tasks are matched carefully to pupils' individual needs and the pupils are challenged and supported effectively on a day-to-day basis. Although progress in lessons is good, with teachers marking work conscientiously, the teachers do not always make enough use of target setting to increase the pace of learning. Not enough guidance is given to pupils about the next steps in their learning and pupils do not have enough time to make the recommended changes. Homework is used well to extend learning and to involve parents and carers in their children's work. The promotion of literacy skills remains a strength and the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is consistent and well-established across the school.

Support staff are experienced, they are used well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers plan experiences for all pupils in mathematics that appeal to their interests and enthuse them. The pupils are challenged by interesting tasks and problems. For example, pupils in Year 5 were calculating the amount of liquid in a variety of tins and containers of different shapes and sizes, learning how to weigh them accurately and investigating which type of scale was the most appropriate. The high level of enjoyment, interest and desire for accuracy was exciting. Leaders have been working concertedly to improve pupils' writing. In good lessons, effective questioning helped pupils to think for themselves and come up with interesting vocabulary.

Careful curriculum planning gives pupils increasingly good opportunities to apply basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in different subjects. The school is successfully promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the good curriculum and extended school opportunities. The inspectors' views of teaching matched those of pupils, parents and carers. The vast majority of those who completed inspection questionnaires agreed that teaching at the school is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are, rightly, pleased with pupils' behaviour. Pupils confirm that they all get on well together and this was seen by inspectors, both in class and around the school. Play spaces were well supervised, with pupils having lots of fun together and supporting each other well. Pupils enjoy working in pairs or groups to discuss their learning and their positive attitudes contribute strongly to their learning. They were observed listening carefully to their teachers and to each other's contributions in lessons.

The school has well-developed systems for promoting good behaviour. Pupils are very confident that bullying occurs very rarely in school and they say that, if it does happen, it is tackled very quickly. Pupils know that bullying can take many forms and they were able to explain clearly the dangers of cyber-bullying. The school ensures that pupils are kept safe and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers confirm this.

Leadership and management

The determined leadership of the headteacher and a strong sense of purpose from the governing body and senior leaders have resulted in Windermere continuing to

improve over the last few years. It is committed fully to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. A key element in this is the improvement in the school's monitoring of pupils' progress since the last inspection. The school is an integrated community with staff, pupils, parents and carers, and the governing body working hard to establish an improving and developing school. The governing body has developed good links with staff; it holds the school to account and uses its respective skills to good advantage. It has a good knowledge of the strengths within the school and areas for development. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The broad and balanced curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well and is developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills successfully so that many pupils with relatively low starting points reach levels of attainment that are in line with those expected for their ages. It is especially good at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social development, as well as nurturing pupils' self-confidence. A wide range of activities is provided, in which pupils can gain a sense of success and worth. The pupils' opinions are valued and they develop skills in empathy through their work in literature, art, drama and music. Also, they develop opportunities throughout their school day to reflect on important issues, which helps them develop a keen sense of right and wrong. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to work together, take responsibility and perform leadership roles; for example, Year 6 mentor younger pupils and playground buddies support those in need of extra care.

The school has worked very hard to engage parents and carers in their children's learning. The high level of inspection questionnaire returns with very positive comments from parents and carers demonstrates their pride and pleasure with the way that leaders have improved the school.

The self-evaluation documents provided by the school leaders show that they have a good understanding of their strengths and what else needs to be done. The school development plan is focused on raising standards. There have been a range of important changes leading to improvement at Windermere in the three years since the school was last inspected. Pupils now make good progress and enjoy a good quality of learning. Leadership across the school has been developed and strengthened and a number of effective strategies are being used to improve the consistency of teaching and further drive up pupils' achievement. Leaders are aware of the need to monitor the effectiveness of learning in the outdoor classroom for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windermere Primary School, St Albans, AL1 5QP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and appreciated the help you gave us. We enjoyed seeing you play so happily outside. Thank you to those of you who filled in the questionnaires and talked with us. It is good to see how much you enjoy reading and how you look forward to helping younger pupils as you get older. Your parents and carers are very pleased with the work of the school; ever so many wanted to tell us how good they think the school is. You and your parents and carers are right to be pleased, because we found Windermere Primary to be a good school.

- You enjoy school and make good progress in your learning.
- Your behaviour is good and it was obvious how well you all get on.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- Your teachers are doing a good job; they work hard to plan interesting activities.
- All staff take good care of you and keep you safe.

Your headteacher agrees that there are some things that the school could do better, so we have asked that:

- all marking should tell you clearly how you can improve your work and teachers should give you more time to understand and act on their advice
- improvements are made in the organisation and planning of the outdoor activities for children in Reception Year to help them learn more easily.

All of you can help the school move forward by continuing to work hard. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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