

Weaverham Forest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111054
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378224
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Denise Shields

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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Jamieson
Headteacher	Gail Morris
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
School address	Forest Street Weaverham Northwich CW8 3EY
Telephone number	01606 288050
Fax number	01606 854736
Email address	head@weaverhamforest.cheshire.sch.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



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Denise Shields

Additional inspector

Mary Liptrot

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed ten teachers teaching eighteen lessons or part-lessons. The inspectors listened to pupils from a range of different ages and abilities read. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors considered the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's strategic development plan, safeguarding documentation and minutes of governing body meetings. They analysed 78 parents' and carers' questionnaires and questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school has achieved Healthy School Status and the International School award.

A new headteacher was appointed shortly after the previous inspection and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2010. Two new teachers joined the school in September 2011.

A pre-school group for 3- and 4-year-olds is provided on site, under separate management. This provision did not form part of the inspection of the main school. The inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Its main strengths are: good levels of care and support enabling pupils to thrive and grow in confidence; good teaching, with examples of outstanding practice; and an exciting curriculum that promotes pupils’ enjoyment of learning. Weaverham Forest is not yet outstanding because in Key Stage 1 tasks do not always sufficiently stretch the more-able pupils. Sometimes reading skills are not taught precisely enough and pupils are not always certain how to improve their work.
- Achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. More pupils than is expected attain the higher levels in these subjects.
- Pupils are inspired to learn through a skilfully planned and interesting curriculum. Most groups of pupils make progress that is at least good and sometimes outstanding. Reading skills are taught well overall, but occasionally these lessons are not sharply focused to enable pupils to make greater progress. Most lessons are pitched correctly to meet pupils’ differing needs and abilities, but in Key Stage 1 more-able pupils’ progress occasionally slows in English and mathematics.
- Behaviour is good around school and in lessons. Overwhelmingly, pupils say they feel safe in the school, a view endorsed by parents and carers. Pupils are keen to succeed in their lessons. Although pupils state confidently that they are increasingly aware of their own achievements, they also comment and inspectors agree, that marking and their learning targets are not always helpful in guiding improvement.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are effective and are securing improvement at a good rate. Leaders have successfully led improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ performance and have enhanced the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In Key Stage 1, increase the rate of progress of the more-able pupils in English and mathematics by ensuring that teachers plan tasks that provide them with a greater depth of challenge.
- Improve the teaching of reading skills so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by ensuring that:
 - the programme to teach the sounds that letters make (phonics) is taught more effectively and guided reading sessions are more sharply-focused on the next steps in each pupils' learning.
- Enable pupils to know how to improve their work by ensuring that:
 - pupils' learning targets are individual to them and clearly inform them of the next steps to improve their learning
 - marking consistently matches the quality of the best practice.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers state that their children make good progress. This is supported by inspection findings. Children in the Reception class make good progress and achieve well. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most groups of pupils make good progress because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. In Key Stage 1, for the most part, in English and mathematics, the more-able pupils are given tasks that are more difficult than those given to their peers. However, these do not always have sufficient depth and challenge to enable pupils to make greater progress. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. More pupils than average attain the higher levels in these subjects. The percentage of pupils at Year 6 attaining standards that exceed the national expectations in both English and mathematics combined exceeds that expected nationally. The performance of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is better than that of similar pupils nationally, reflecting the good-quality care and well-targeted guidance they receive.

Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning. This is because teachers are skilled at adapting the curriculum to ignite pupils' imagination and spark their enthusiasm. Most pupils try their best at all times and concentrate well. Almost all work well with a partner or in groups; this is helping them to become confident and independent learners. This was apparent in a literacy lesson for the oldest pupils, where they were asked to work in groups and consider whether, 'Did you ever kill anyone?' was an effective opening phrase for a story. This generated considerable mature discussion, debate, ideas and responses from the pupils. For instance, they suggested, 'it drags the reader in' or 'it makes you wonder who is talking to each other'. The task captured pupils' imaginations, enabled them to explore their own ideas and deepened their understanding and so their learning and progress was rapid.

Most groups of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because basic skills are taught well, generally. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to use computers. Pupils have lots of opportunities to practise their writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills because the curriculum is rich and

varied. Pupils comment that using these skills in different lessons helps them learn a lot. Many boys state they now enjoy writing because tasks capture their interest. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 the gap between the attainment of boys and that of girls in writing is closing rapidly. Most pupils state that they enjoy reading and in the main there is an interesting range of books to choose from. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is average. By the time they leave Year 6, it is above average and more pupils than average attain the higher levels.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers express the view that their children are taught well. Inspectors endorse these positive views. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress as a result of good teaching and a stimulating, fun curriculum. An example of this was observed when, as part of the hospital theme, the class received 'a letter from Mr Bean', explaining that he could not visit the school, but was in hospital having hurt his leg in a car crash. Children were captivated. The teacher's adept questioning developed children's ideas well and prompted them to consider the questions they could send to Mr Bean, to determine what had led to the crash. Children listened well to each other's ideas, such as 'why did you sit on top of the car?' They enjoyed the activity and progress was good.

In almost all lessons the interactive whiteboard is used effectively to engage pupils and extend their knowledge. In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at consolidating pupils' new learning through the use of well-chosen activities. Imaginative use is made of resources that capture pupils' attention and learning is often rapid. In most good lessons, skilful questioning engages pupils' interest and extends their knowledge quickly. Opportunities for pupils to talk in pairs and to share their ideas successfully promote speaking, listening and co-operation. Teaching assistants and other trained adults guide the learning of individuals and small groups sensitively and effectively. This enables them to make good progress. Throughout the school, relationships are strong so pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they should need it. Marking and individual learning targets do not always clearly inform pupils how to improve their work.

The teaching of reading skills is good overall but practice varies between classes. In the best lessons, well-structured guided reading sessions give pupils the tools they need to move their learning forward swiftly. Teachers ensure that the balance between whole-class, group and individual phonic work (the sounds that letters make) is just right. In these lessons, teachers have clear enunciation and this aids pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make. Sometimes, however, the balance between activities is not always suitable and the focus of guided reading sessions is too broad. On these occasions, pupils' progress is slower.

Curriculum planning often contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 2, for example, as part of a space theme, pupils pretended to be aliens. They wrote letters to send home to their families explaining how they felt being marooned on Earth. Pupils showed a mature awareness and empathy for the feelings that the 'aliens' may have experienced.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children in the Reception class form trusting relationships with adults. They learn to co-operate, behave well and most are keen to help and support each other. Pupils are sociable

and polite. They play well together during lunch and playtimes. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying. The vast majority, however, is very satisfied with behaviour. The inspection findings show that behaviour is nearly always good in lessons and around the school and that disruptive behaviour is rare; this is confirmed during discussions with different groups of pupils. Pupils understand and accept the need for rules. They enthusiastically talk about the reward systems such as having team points, and being nominated to be praised in assembly. In discussions, they explain clearly the 'traffic light system' and are fully aware of the consequence of being placed in the red zone; although they state that this is a rare occurrence.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that there is always an adult to turn to if they are troubled or unhappy. Pupils understand different types of bullying and say that bullying is very rare. The very few incidents of bullying have been dealt with to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive on time. As a result of robust systems and leaders' relentless drive to reduce absenteeism, good improvement has been secured and sustained. Consequently, attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Visionary leadership by the headteacher, supported by capable senior and middle leaders and an effective governing body have moved the school forward. Members of the governing body know the school well, monitor its work and are fully involved in determining its strategic direction. Good school improvement planning reflects accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to improve and has underpinned good improvement since the previous inspection. Professional development is closely aligned to school priorities; this is a key factor in securing improvements in teaching and learning. Opportunities to share good practice in teaching with colleagues across the school, through the supportive coaching programme, are benefiting pupils. This is illustrated by improved pupils' performance, for example, boys' writing. All of these factors mean that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and caters for pupils' needs and interests. Subjects are brought together in topics and themes that are creative and interesting. The provision made for art and music is particularly strong and is greatly enjoyed by pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs after school, educational and residential visits. All these experiences contribute greatly to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils benefit from a caring and supportive environment in which everyone is valued. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively and tackles discrimination well by narrowing gaps in learning and ensuring that the school is a harmonious and happy community. Careful attention is given to provide the support required to improve the achievement of both individuals and also particular groups who might be in danger of falling behind their targets. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

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 up 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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weaverham Forest Primary School, Northwich, CW8 3EY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we inspected your school. A particular 'thank you' goes to those of you who filled in the questionnaires, were keen to talk with us and welcomed us to your lessons. Please thank your parents and carers who also filled in our questionnaires.

Weaverham Forest is a good school. These are the things we found to be strengths. The youngest children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. In Key Stages 1 and 2, good teaching helps you to achieve well, to make good progress and by the end of Year 6, to attain standards in English and mathematics that are above average. Many lessons are exciting and you told us how much you like learning. Other activities, such as those linked to art and music help to build your self-confidence. All of you benefit from good levels of care which is one reason why your behaviour is good and you all get along with each other. Most of you enjoy coming to school. We are pleased that you feel safe and say that bullying is very rare. Your parents and carers like the school, too, and are happy with it.

Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body know the school well and they are good at finding ways to make your school even better.

These are some things we think will help your school to improve further. In Key Stage 1, we have asked your school to ensure that more difficult work is given to those of you who learn more quickly. We have also asked your school to ensure that in all classes you are taught to read more effectively and, your teachers always make your learning targets clear and individual to you and that marking tells you how you can improve.

You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields
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.