

West Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106609
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	355982
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms June Hawkins
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed 13 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with governors and staff and talked with pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 65 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is raising pupils' attainment.
- How well teaching sustains good rates of progress among pupils.
- How effectively the school promotes pupils' regular attendance.
- The accuracy of the school's assessment of its key strengths.
- How successfully the leadership ensures sustainable improvement in the school's performance.

Information about the school

The school is of average size when compared to other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is far higher than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy Schools 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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

West Meadows Primary is a good school. It is firmly set on an upward path due to the purposeful vision of the headteacher and the commitment by staff, at all levels, to achieving this. The school has worked tenaciously to forge strong links with parents and carers following the break-up of the school community when the old school closed some years ago. This resulted in some barriers developing between home and school which have taken time to dismantle. Parents and carers are now fully supportive of the school. Their typical references to 'good school, good headteacher, good teachers' accurately sum up the school.

Much has improved since the last inspection due to the relentless focus on improvement by senior leaders and staff. For example, pupils' attainment, although broadly average in English and mathematics, continues to rise securely for all groups of pupils from historically low levels. This also applies to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. More accurate assessment and use of data ensure that pupils achieve well and that teaching focuses correctly on the next learning steps. Previous strengths have consolidated pastoral support and the provision for children in the early years particularly relating to the curriculum. Safeguarding is an outstanding aspect of the school's work. Procedures relating to child protection are of the highest quality. Documented case studies demonstrate the school's extensive involvement with a variety of external agencies that result in highly positive outcomes for individual pupils. Pupils continue to develop strong personal skills overall, although their awareness of diversity in Britain is weaker than of that found in other communities. Pupils behave well and are eager to contribute to school life. They are good ambassadors for the school within the local community. Despite concerted efforts from mentoring and support staff, attendance levels remain around the national average. Well-organised administrators, lunchtime and ancillary staff ensure that the school runs smoothly from day to day.

The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body are highly focused on improving all elements of the school's work. They communicate their ambitions for the school clearly to pupils, parents and carers. They recognise that the school has to sustain and build still further upon the current improvements in the attainment of all groups of pupils. Priorities are correctly identified through accurate and well-evidenced self-evaluation. These improvements and continuing strengths demonstrate that the school's capacity for sustained improvement remains good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:

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- raising the expectations of some teachers still further and so provide increased challenge for pupils
- creating more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in lessons
- improving the consistency of teachers' marking in terms of feedback to pupils on how to improve their work
- ensuring that the individual mathematics targets set by teachers for pupils have the same clarity and detail as the targets for literacy.
- Raise pupils' levels of attendance by:
 - introducing a wide range of incentives to encourage parents and carers to send their children to school every day
 - introducing more rewards for pupils and classes when they improve their rates of attendance
 - using more explicit examples to explain to parents and carers why it is important that their children attend school every day
 - increasing the role of the governing body in monitoring rates of attendance.
- Develop pupils' awareness of diversity in British society by:
 - exploring different ways to engage with a range of ethnically diverse communities and schools
 - ensuring that the governing body takes a more active role in the promotion of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy school greatly and achieve well. Their good attitudes in lessons ensure that they make the most of their time in school. Pupils settle well in lessons and several commented to inspectors that they 'love being in this class'. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions so that time is not wasted at the start of independent or group work. Pupils are quick to answer teachers' questions and enjoy writing activities that have a practical element such as letter writing. Pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics and continues to rise. This shows good progress from their generally well-below-average starting points. Pupils from different groups such as higher attainers and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. They enjoy purposeful and often practical activities with the guidance of knowledgeable support staff and teachers.

Pupils say that the school is an extremely safe place and that adults support them well. Pupils are generally punctual. Attendance levels are rising slowly and are broadly average overall. Pupils show good insight into diet and exercise. All pupils take turns throughout the month to participate in 'Freddy Fit' sessions in the hall, led by the older pupils. These are high energy dance and movement sessions that the pupils thoroughly enjoy. Pupils also enjoy the healthy school lunches. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and local community. For example, they now fundraise to sponsor a child in Brazil and talk animatedly about her life. Pupils show respect for others and embrace difference on the

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relatively rare occasions that they encounter people from different cultural backgrounds, but they are not sufficiently aware of diversity in British society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan well and make effective use of assessment information. They generally provide sufficient challenge and support for pupils of differing abilities. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows because tasks offer insufficient challenge to pupils. The effectiveness of teaching assistants is a strength. Their high quality support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils do as well as their peers. They benefit from focused one-to-one or small group work where challenge and expectation is high. For example, during literacy support groups, adults worked tenaciously with consistent expectations of behaviour. They challenge the pupils to provide more accurate and highly focused answers. Each pupil has individual targets set for English and mathematics. The English targets are precise and well-known by pupils. However, the targets in mathematics are not as clear and some pupils struggle to remember them. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and offer encouragement. However, this feedback is inconsistent. Some is of a very high quality. Other examples do not provide pupils with sufficient information about how to improve their work.

The reorganised curriculum ensures that pupils benefit from absorbing topic work with key skills as a focus. In particular, pupils develop their writing skills through a range of

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activities. In Year 2, for instance, pupils have recently investigated the world of chocolate from its Aztec origins. They looked at how it is now manufactured, researched recipes and then made, evaluated and sold their own unique brand. Similar strategies are applied throughout the school and help to engage pupils more readily in their work. Currently, pupils have too little opportunity to use and consolidate their computer skills in lessons.

High quality pastoral support for pupils is at the heart of the school's work. This is reflected in the positive responses from pupils to inspection and school surveys and also in the views of parents and carers. As one parent commented, 'We are always given help and support as needed.' Sensitive mentoring in a tranquil atmosphere puts pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities at their ease. This helps them to make the most of the one-to-one support on offer so that, overall, they make good and sometimes rapid progress. The school works hard to sustain rising attendance figures. However, these strategies are not motivating a wide enough cross section of parents and carers. They still do not understand exactly why it is important for their children to attend regularly. There are too few incentives to motivate parents and carers to send children to school every day. Rewards for pupils to try harder to improve their attendance, whatever levels they currently reach, are scarce.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff promote a strong and supportive team ethic which draws the best from staff. This cooperative approach does not, however, mask the keen ambition and drive for success that emanates from the leadership. Self-evaluation is robust and provides a clear direction for the school to follow in its quest to become outstanding.

Parents and carers are actively involved in the work of the school and the popularity of family learning programmes continues to grow. Strong partnerships exist with other schools and organisations. Of particular note, is the expertise gained by staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage from high quality local practice. Induction and transition programmes are effective.

The school adopts recommended outstanding practice with regard to safeguarding procedures and pays close attention to the safety of the school site. Parents, carers and pupils confirm this. Record keeping is meticulous. Senior leaders and the governing body play an active role in ensuring this rigorous approach is consistently maintained throughout the school. Adults promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well and this ensures that pupils, irrespective of background, gender or individual need,

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reach their potential. Leaders recognise that more remains to be done to develop the currently sound promotion of community cohesion, particularly by the governing body. Currently, there is a lack of engagement with communities and schools beyond the immediate locality and which represent diversity in British society. The governing body is knowledgeable, conscientious and provides good levels of challenge and support to senior leaders. However, they do not monitor pupils' rates of attendance closely enough. The school deploys its resources well. It achieves good outcomes for pupils and provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements for children of this age, and all welfare requirements are fully met. Leaders have worked closely with an outstanding early years practitioner based locally to develop stronger provision. As a result, children's outcomes are much improved. In 2010, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was the highest ever, and was above the national average. This is important for children's future success and well-being as they move through the school. Improved learning environments, inside and outdoors, coupled with more focused adult support, succeed in helping to develop children's language and social skills in particular. There is now a key strategy for staff to model spoken language through ongoing commentaries when children first arrive in the setting. This is having a measurable impact, as children's generally low levels of language on entry, were a barrier to them responding fully to the questioning techniques previously used by staff. Evidence shows that, at that stage, staff asked children searching questions but they did not have sufficient language skills to respond.

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Safe and well-tended indoor and outdoor learning environments encourage children to investigate, learn and develop among a wide range of varied resources. In particular, the 'wild walk' wooded area outside provides a stimulating resource and helps children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they investigate hidden wonders found beneath logs. They learn to problem solve and estimate. For example, some pondered whether or not a squirrel really could nest inside a bird box, as one child suggested. Parents offer praise and typically remark that they are 'very impressed with the setting, the staff and the range of activities available'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Slightly more than a quarter of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. This relatively low return reflects parents' and carers' preference for providing the school with verbal feedback or via text messaging which is proving to be an increasingly valuable communication tool. Their responses demonstrate full support for how well their children enjoy school. They confirm overwhelmingly that children are kept safe, taught well, listened to and that the school is effectively led and managed. This feedback reflects that gathered by the school from its own surveys and by the inspection team. Typically, parents and carers comment that, 'My child has made excellent progress,' and 'Family learning courses help me support my child's learning and help me enormously'. Within the very small number of negative comments received, there was no underlying pattern as these related to individual issues. These were followed up by the inspection team and were found to have been dealt with appropriately by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Meadows Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	78	14	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	78	14	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	62	24	37	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	65	21	32	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	77	13	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	69	18	28	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	71	17	26	0	0	2	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	66	19	29	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	63	22	34	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	62	20	31	2	3	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	62	24	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	68	18	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	77	13	20	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Meadows Primary School, Barnsley, S74 9ET

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school. We appreciate the time you spent talking to us and sharing your work. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school, how you make good progress and how well you behave.

We judge that West Meadows Primary School is a good school. You told us that adults take good care of you and that you feel safe in school. You also said that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job. We agree that they, along with the governing body do many things well, although we have identified some things to improve. You all reach higher standards now and learn and progress well, whatever your individual needs. You enjoy making a strong contribution to the local community as well as to the school which is good to see. The improved curriculum encourages more of you to take an increasing interest in your work and to make stronger links in your learning, particularly through the key skills topic work. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.

We have asked the adults to improve a few aspects of your school. First, we want them to help you do even better in English and mathematics. Second, we want the adults to ensure that your attendance rates rise. Third, we want your teachers to help you to be more aware of the different groups of people within multicultural Britain. You can all help by continuing to improve your attendance with the help of your parents and carers. Also, please carry on trying hard with your work.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Hughes

Lead inspector

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