

Warren Dell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117169
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358100
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Butcher
Headteacher	Jenny Morley
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons taught by 7 teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors, pupils and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, policy documents, work in pupils' books and reports from the local authority. Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and 54 parents and carers.

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

- How effective is the school in raising and maintaining standards of attainment?
- Are rates of attendance improving quickly enough?
- How effectively are leaders at all levels driving school improvement?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is well above the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one class. Nursery aged children attend each morning and Reception children attend full time. The school runs a breakfast club each morning. The school has received Healthy Schools status, the Bronze Eco Award and the foundation level International Award.

The school was last inspected in December 2009 when it was given a Notice to Improve. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher. Almost all the teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. The longest serving teacher has been employed by the school for five terms.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and curriculum have been at the forefront of this school's recovery. Typically, pupils have started Key Stage 1 with skills and experiences below those expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and achieve in line with their peers. Pupils reach standards of attainment that are broadly average. There remains a legacy of underachievement, particularly for writing in Key Stage 2, where pupils have missed out on prior learning. Inspectors found that, where this remains the case, pupils are now making accelerated progress as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, along with well placed additional support in class, in small groups and through one-to-one provision.

While teaching is good overall, there remains variability in the effectiveness of some marking and feedback to pupils. All teachers are following the school's agreed policy for marking and feedback and, where this is being done well, pupils' progress is being accelerated because of the high quality advice they receive and act on to improve their work. This approach is less effective in some classes because pupils are not expected to read or respond to the advice being given and so it has limited impact. In a small number of cases, the advice given is not as useful as it could be because it is not specific enough for pupils to use to improve their work.

The curriculum is well designed to be exciting and develop pupils' skills. Pupils enjoy their learning a great deal and use their experiences from trips and visits to good effect as a stimulus for writing and speaking. The teaching of spelling is taught well and the previously reported gaps in pupils' knowledge of the sounds letters make are being filled rapidly. In some year groups the school has changed the timetable to enable pupils to spend longer periods of time working on numeracy. The school can point to compelling evidence that this is having a positive impact on pupils' engagement with mathematics and the progress they make, particularly in the using and applying of mathematics. However, this timetabling means that pupils do not get daily opportunities to practise their number skills and some pupils perform calculations slowly because of their limited number dexterity.

Senior leaders have proved themselves. They have galvanised the support of all staff and have driven school improvement with rigour and determination. School improvements are multiple and impressive. Attendance has improved steadily and is now broadly average. Many parents and carers comment on the impact new leadership has had in turning the school around. The effectiveness of the governing body has improved. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. The significant

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numbers of new governors are quickly coming up to speed with their roles as a result of the support they receive from more established governors and training through the local authority. Detailed plans are in place to ensure governors plan and monitor the effectiveness of the school. These are fairly new and yet to have a significant impact. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed to school improvement. A consequence of the pace of change and the recent appointment of most teachers is that middle leadership roles and responsibilities are at an early stage of development. This has not held the school back in its school improvement journey. However, senior leaders recognise that the time is ripe for areas of responsibility and school improvement to be distributed more evenly so that it continues at pace. On balance, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' dexterity with numbers and counting by providing high quality daily opportunities for pupils to practise their mental and oral skills.
- Ensure that feedback and guidance given to pupils is always useful by:
 - making sure feedback is specifically about the learning taking place and points to ways that pupils can improve their work and use new skills in future work
 - providing pupils with the opportunity to make specific changes to their work to reflect the suggestions made in feedback.
- Increase the effectiveness of middle leaders by:
 - ensuring roles and responsibilities are well defined and understood
 - providing training for staff so they understand their role as middle leaders
 - providing opportunities for middle leaders to be fully involved in the monitoring and evaluating of the school's effectiveness so they can contribute to tightly focused school improvement planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their learning a great deal. In the best lessons, teachers use real life scenarios effectively to reinforce learning. Pupils in one class gasped and laughed as their teacher tried to eat a bread roll made by the teaching assistant who had used the wrong proportions of ingredients. Their determination to use the right proportions made pupils doubly careful when measuring out their own ingredients and, as a consequence, their learning about measures and proportions was outstanding.

In another lesson, teachers used well placed questions skilfully to get pupils to think about photos that had been taken of them during a recent trip to Downing Street. These images were used as an effective stimulus by pupils to develop play-scripts. In this class, pupils had a very clear understanding of what was needed to successfully write a play-script and they knew and worked on their targets for improving their writing. The quality of pupils' writing varies considerably, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This is because previous inconsistencies in teaching have led to pupils falling behind. Despite this difference in standards, all pupils work hard and the gap is closing because the tasks set for them are

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well chosen and teachers have been successful in building pupils' confidence, perseverance and basic skills.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are very confident in the adults who care for them and talk warmly about their teachers and other adults in school. Attendance has improved considerably because the school has engaged parents and carers and pupils in understanding the importance of good attendance. Attendance is also helped greatly by the fact that pupils want to be in school and enjoy their time there. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the range of experiences on offer both in school and on trips and visits. Behaviour is generally very good around school although one or two pupils become a little silly when teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living. They understand the importance of healthy diet and regular exercise.

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?

The great majority of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated with no teaching being less than satisfactory. In most lessons work is well matched to the learning needs of individuals. Activities are exciting and pupils strive to do well. Assessment data is used effectively to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Consequently, well-placed activities both in class and for individuals and groups are planned and carefully monitored to ensure they are effective.

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In most classes, pupils are set targets that precisely focus on making small step improvements to their work. However, in some classes, teachers' feedback is not sufficiently focused on these targets and the success criteria for the lessons. In other lessons, teachers provide focused feedback but pupils do not consistently respond or learn from it. Where pupils do respond to teachers' good quality feedback, their learning accelerates because they have the opportunity to improve their work and learn from their mistakes.

The curriculum is exciting and highly motivating. Pupils were full of praise for the range of activities that are organised for them. Much thought has been given to the curriculum and pupils are catching up from previous underachievement through carefully planned sessions that help fill gaps in their knowledge. Phonics are taught throughout the school and this is having a positive impact on achievement in reading and writing. Additional interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who have fallen behind are proving successful. This is because these are well adapted to meet the specific needs of individuals and the adults who are implementing these are skilled and confident about what they are working towards.

Pupils are very well cared for. Support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is effective. The school is working closely with a range of agencies to support pupils and their families. The school has been successful in promoting positive attendance with all groups within school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 impressive improvements seen in many aspects of this school are testament to the effectiveness of leaders. They have galvanised the support and commitment of all involved in the school to improve at pace. With effective support from the local authority, senior leaders have set a clear agenda for improvement and moved skilfully to make progress on many fronts. Middle leaders are highly supportive of the senior leadership team and the work that staff have done collectively to make this a good school. It is recognised that middle leaders are ready to take on a more proactive role so that the responsibility for monitoring and improving the quality of provision is shared more widely than the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The governing body is developing well. The Chair of the Governing Body and other experienced members are proving good role models for the significant number of new and inexperienced members. The governing body is increasingly well informed and some members are effective at holding the school to account. Systems for safeguarding pupils

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are in place and secure. Staff and the governing body have received appropriate training. The member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding has a clear understanding of the requirements and is proactive in ensuring that these are met.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are highly positive about the work of the school. Regular newsletters keep parents and carers informed. The school regularly seeks their views and actively encourages them to be involved in the life of the school.

The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and this can be seen in the positive relationships that exist among pupils from different backgrounds. The school collects data that show how different groups and individuals are performing academically. Previous inequalities have been clearly identified and provision has been put in place so that gaps in attainment between different groups are closing rapidly.

The school is a cohesive community with pupils from different backgrounds getting on noticeably well with each other. Leaders have accurately analysed their provision to promote community cohesion. Good quality links with schools in different parts of the United Kingdom and abroad provide pupils with a good understanding of cultural and social diversity.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children clearly enjoy their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and take part in activities with enthusiasm and concentration. Adults are skilled at asking well-placed questions which encourage children to develop language skills. No learning opportunity is missed, with adults picking up quickly on children's interests so they learn through activities that excite and motivate them.

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When children learn through the activities they choose themselves, the classroom and outdoor area are hives of activity. Children learn to work together, communicate, look after themselves and empathise with others as they take part in activities including den building, role-play, painting, making and digging. During teacher-led sessions, children concentrate well and make good gains. For example, in a phonics session, children worked hard to understand the sounds different letter combinations make. In this lesson they happily celebrated their new learning and made links with their existing knowledge.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Good plans exist to improve the facilities further. A new purpose built Early Years Foundation Stage unit is due to open imminently and leaders have designed this with a very clear rationale for high quality learning. Other adults in the classroom are guided well so they know how to encourage children in their learning appropriately. From low starting points compared to those expected for their age, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they enter Year 1 with skills near those expected.

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

Parents and carers are generally very positive about the school and the improvement seen in recent times. There is an overwhelming confidence in the leadership of the school and all parents and carers who responded stated that their children enjoy school. One parent raised concerns about the lack of large equipment in the playground for children to play on. The school is aware of this and a company has been commissioned to start work imminently on an adventure play area. The plans for this are displayed in school. A small number of parents and carers stated that their children would benefit from extra help and a statement of special educational need. Inspectors found the school's systems for identifying special needs and/or disabilities, along with the provision made, to be effective. Most comments made by parents and carers were in praise of the improvements seen and the effectiveness of the leadership and teaching team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Warren Dell 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	61	20	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	63	20	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	57	23	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	48	25	46	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	50	26	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	50	25	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	46	26	48	1	2	1	2
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)	23	43	23	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	46	24	44	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	44	22	41	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	39	29	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	54	22	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	67	17	31	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.



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- main findings from the inspection of their school.

4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Warren Dell Primary School, Watford, WD19 7UZ

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to let you know what I found out.

Your school has improved a great deal since it was last inspected. It is now a good school. I found that you are all doing much better in lessons because teaching is now good and you usually find lessons and other activities exciting and interesting. I know that many of you are working really hard to improve your work. I found that the extra help you are getting to do this in class and out of class is making a real difference. Keep working hard. It really is worth it. I have asked your teachers and headteacher to work on a few extra things. I am sure that you will continue to do all you can to help them make your school even better.

I have asked your teachers to make sure you get a chance to read the comments they make about your work and you have some time to make the improvements. This is so you can learn from what you are being told and move forward more quickly with reaching your targets. I know that you do this in some classes. I would like to see this in every class.

I have also asked your teachers to find some time each day for you to practise your skills with numbers. I like the fact that some of your numeracy sessions are longer. I saw one where the extra time meant that you were able to learn about measures by making bread. It looked to be great fun and you were learning very quickly. By having some time each day to sharpen your number skills, you will become so much quicker when using mathematics.

Finally, I have asked your headteacher and deputy headteacher to share some of the leadership jobs with other teachers in school. This means that more teachers will be looking after different areas of school improvement and your headteacher can bring even more exciting changes to your school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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