

Weston Mill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113269
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	357307
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Allen
Headteacher	Alison Nettleship
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 21 lessons taught by 11 teachers and an assembly were observed. Pupils' books were scrutinised and the school's pupil assessment data were analysed. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and senior staff. Inspectors also had discussions with the School Improvement Partner, who is also a representative of the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised key strategic documents, including those relating to safeguarding, governing body meetings and reports from external partners. Inspection questionnaires were completed by 71 parents and carers. The inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and took their views into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the reasons for the apparent significant underachievement of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6
- the impact of the new headteacher and leadership, including the governing body, in reversing the decline since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Weston Mill is a larger-than-average primary school. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009. Last year several members of staff were absent for extended periods of time. The majority of pupils are White British. About 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The school has almost twice the average proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these are for specific learning difficulties. A higher number of pupils than usual join the school throughout the school year. The school runs a breakfast club. The school has gained the Eco-School Bronze Award.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' attainment is low and their learning and progress are inadequate. The lack of secure information about pupils' starting points in Years 1 to 6 and shortcomings in assessment systems to track their progress mean that the school's leaders have an inadequate knowledge of pupils' learning and are unable to set challenging targets. Pupils' progress between Years 3 to 6 has been significantly below that expected since 2008, although it did improve in 2009. Teachers' assessments in 2010 show that attainment remains low because pupils made inadequate progress in English, mathematics and science. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is low, showing that pupils in Key Stage 1 also make inadequate progress. The progress of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities has been similar to that of their peers in recent years but is improving because of better support. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start because they are well taught in a lively and stimulating environment. They make good progress, often from low starting points, and their attainment is broadly average when they start in Year 1.

The headteacher has clearly identified what needs to be done to raise attainment and accelerate progress. Inadequate teaching has been tackled rigorously and five new teachers have been appointed this year. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory and there were a small number of good lessons. However, the lack of accurate assessment information affects the ability of teachers to plan lessons that consistently meet the range of learning needs of individual pupils based on their prior learning.

The school provides a warm, welcoming environment where pupils feel safe because arrangements for their safeguarding are robust. They behave well. They take an active role in the school community and contributed to the introduction of a positive behaviour management system last year, deciding what the rewards for good behaviour would be. Though attendance levels are still low, over the last year the school has successfully reduced the number of persistent absentees and punctuality has improved. The curriculum provides a good range of enrichment activities, such as visits and after-school clubs, but is inadequate in its development of pupils' basic skills. The care and support for potentially vulnerable pupils and their families are very strong and supported well through effective partnerships. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is becoming more focused and effective and this is starting to accelerate their progress. Links with parents are good

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and have been significantly improved over the last year. Despite the difficulties the school is currently facing, parents and carers are strongly supportive and one commented, typically, 'there is a strong caring ethos'.

The headteacher and, increasingly, other leaders have an accurate view of the difficulties the school still faces. Over the last two years, the governing body has worked hard to improve its skills and expertise so that it now monitors the work of the school appropriately and provides the challenge it needs. Currently the headteacher has sole responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school. Leadership roles lack clarity and staff are unclear about their responsibilities because job descriptions are not in place. Staff do not have an effective role in raising achievement and monitoring teaching and learning. The school's current capacity to make the necessary improvements is, therefore, inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise attainment and accelerate progress, improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' ages and abilities.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring all staff with leadership roles have the skills to carry them out and fully understand their accountabilities
 - ensuring assessment information is accurate and used more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points, and to set challenging targets
 - rigorously monitoring and driving improvement in the quality of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are at levels lower than those expected for their age. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not making enough progress in their learning. They say, however, that the work they have to do in lessons is now much harder and the targets set for them are helping them to make better progress. Opportunities for them to take more responsibility for their own learning are at an early stage. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and, when stimulated by good teaching, they become keen and enthusiastic learners. The week of the inspection was 'Safety Week' with talks given by Community Police Officers, who are regular visitors to the school. During a road safety quiz, pupils were motivated to improve on their previous scores and proud of their achievement when they did.

Pupils' behaviour remains good, even when teaching fails to stimulate them to learn. Pupils are supportive of each other and during a whole school assembly on 'difference', for example, they celebrated each other's gifts and talents. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and particularly enjoy the after-school sports activities. The school council provides an effective forum for pupils to express their views and take an active role in school improvement. They particularly like showing visitors around their school. Pupils are encouraged to become good citizens and play an active role in the local community as young wardens, for example, in the Neighbourhood Management recycling

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scheme. There is a good partnership with a local information and communication technology company that gives pupils opportunities to develop workplace skills in a 'real life' setting. However, pupils' basic skills are underdeveloped and this, coupled with their low attendance, does not prepare them well for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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?

Although several teachers are new to the school, good relationships have already been established with pupils. However, because of previous unsatisfactory teaching, all pupils are working at levels below those expected and progress in lessons is not sufficient to enable them to make the necessary gains in learning to rectify this. The lack of accurate assessment information has affected the grouping of pupils in mathematics and literacy sets. These groupings are now being reviewed in light of teachers' current assessments. In the few good lessons, pupils developed their basic skills well, for example by using a dictionary to find words and understand text, and were encouraged to evaluate their own work. However, on occasions, the pace of learning is slow because expectations of what pupils can achieve by the end of the lesson are not high enough. Pupils also repeat work that has already been taught the previous year due to inadequate recording of curriculum coverage and pupils' previous learning. Teaching assistants are not deployed effectively enough to ensure that they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

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The curriculum is enriched through initiatives such as the Sports Coordinator Programme and the Curriculum Innovation Group. Effective partnerships with the local college and teacher training college provide additional opportunities for more able pupils and those who are gifted and talented in sport. However, curriculum planning is not monitored to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are applied in different contexts or that other key skills, such as information and communication technology, are developed effectively.

The Excellence Cluster provides good support and worked effectively with the school to improve attendance last year. Learning mentors and counsellors help pupils to catch up on work missed through absence. There are good links with health professionals, other agencies and pupils' families. The parent support advisor makes a significant contribution to the support pupils receive through her liaison with home, the local community and external agencies. The 'men behaving dadly' (sic) workshop was a great success. The breakfast club is well organised and provides a healthy start to the day for children who attend. Provision for special educational needs is becoming much more focused. Currently, a review is under way to ensure those who have just fallen behind in their learning, rather than a learning difficulty, are given the right support to help them to catch up. There is good, well-targeted support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Interventions, such as small group work, are beginning to support pupils with specific learning difficulties more effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The commitment and drive of the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are evident in the way she has tackled inadequate teaching over the last year. She has set the vision for the future, involving staff and the governing body in the process. Much more, however, needs to be done. Progress towards improving the quality of leadership was impeded last year by the long-term absence of several members of staff with management responsibilities. The governing body is now actively involved in the school, for example in curriculum development and by attending meetings to discuss pupils' progress. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. There is now an effective parents' forum that acts as an independent body representing parents' views and addressing their concerns.

Safeguarding procedures are good and staff at all levels are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. The school's provision for equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is inadequate because of the lack of accurate knowledge about pupils' learning. The school has developed good links with its local

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community and has links with a school in Africa. However, it is aware that it needs to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of diverse communities within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery and Reception classes are based in a new spacious facility which allows children to move freely between outside and indoor activities. Children are well supervised and kept safe. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes have settled quickly into their new environment and are becoming increasingly confident and secure. There was a buzz of excitement during a 'party time' activity. Children planned their party, produced invitations, decided on games, made cakes with candles and took photographs of each other. Early writing and numeracy skills were developed through play, together with decision making and negotiation which helped with their personal and social development. Children make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Analysis of areas of learning has shown that boys do not do as well as girls in developing early literacy skills. As a result, an advanced skills teacher is now working with the teachers on this area. 'Learning Journey' records are used well to track children's progress and regular observations give staff the opportunity to plan their next steps in learning. Children are well prepared for their transition into the main school. They are placed in school houses and take part in whole school team activities. Opportunities are provided for children to explore the wider world through visits to both the local and wider community. Staff work well together and all make a good contribution to the quality of children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led by an experienced practitioner who sets high expectations for children and staff, and leads developments effectively.

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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

About 22% of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and all were happy with their child's experience at school. They felt their child was kept safe and was helped to develop a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence reflects these views. Parents and carers also felt that teaching is good. Inspectors found that over time teaching is inadequate and the use of assessment to support learning is a significant shortcoming. A few parents expressed concerns regarding information about children's progress, behaviour management and how the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that progress meetings are held regularly, and pupils' targets shared with parents so they can monitor their child's progress and discuss this with teachers at the end of the year. Effective positive behaviour management procedures were introduced last year. The parents' forum is accessible through email and a mailbox in the reception area of the school to deal with any concerns and gives parents the opportunity to share their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Weston Mill Community 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	51	32	45	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	59	29	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	27	41	58	9	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	34	42	59	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	31	46	65	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	27	46	65	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	37	45	63	0	0	0	0
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)	16	23	44	62	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	24	48	68	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	24	36	51	11	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	15	46	65	6	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	30	45	63	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	44	37	52	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Mill Community Primary School, Plymouth PL2 2EL

◆ I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school and your work.

Most of you who completed the questionnaire and spoke to inspectors said that you enjoy school and feel safe. You particularly like visits to places of interest and the opportunities to take responsibility in the school. A few of you expressed some concern about behaviour in class. We found that the behaviour management procedures put into place last year are working and that the behaviour of the majority of you in lessons was good, even when you find the work too easy or the task does not interest you enough.

◆ We found that your school is not currently giving you a good enough education and you are not making sufficient progress in your work. The standard of teaching you receive is variable. To help the school improve we have decided that it requires 'special measures', which means that it will be closely monitored and supported in the future. These are the improvements we have asked the staff to make.

- We want staff with leadership responsibilities to make sure that teaching improves and helps you all to make better progress in your learning.
- We have asked the teachers to make sure that their assessment of your learning is accurate to help you to improve from your different starting points.
- We also want teachers to make sure that assessment information is used to plan lessons and set more challenging targets for you to achieve.

I wish you all the best in your future studies and thank you again for being so polite and courteous

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild

Lead inspector

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