

West Rainton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114128
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357483
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Beck
Headteacher	Mr Dean Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West Rainton Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH4 6RN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, saw eight different teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records,. They also scrutinised the 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- Whether actions taken by the school's leaders to improve teaching and the curriculum are leading to sustainable improvements in attainment, especially in writing.
- Whether actions taken by the school's leaders are leading to sustainable improvements in attendance.
- Whether pupils have a clear understanding of life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small but significant number of pupils from Traveller and Gypsy/Roma families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those with a statement of special educational needs are average. The school achieved Activemark in 2009 and Artsmark Gold in 2010.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2009, following a period of instability in the leadership of the school.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In this satisfactory school, the senior leadership team has initiated strategies which have reversed a decline in standards and led to improvements in teaching and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While they have not yet had time to ensure that pupils make better than satisfactory progress, appropriate strategies are in place which have returned attainment in reading and mathematics to broadly average. While standards in writing have improved, they remain lower than average because pupils are not offered sufficient opportunities to write at length or to apply the skills they have learned in writing in subjects across the curriculum. Similarly, the curriculum offers too few opportunities across school for pupils to think critically and to apply their skills in a range of exciting activities. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money.

All staff provide sensitive care and support, which ensure that pupils work and play well together, are happy and feel safe. Accordingly, pupils from different cultures are keen to learn, behave well and have good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy.

The school has much useful information about pupils' skills and abilities which is increasingly well used to identify the learning needs of individual pupils and to measure progress. However, such information is not yet used well enough to ensure that work is always well matched to the needs of individual pupils, especially the most able. While marking tells pupils how well they have achieved against their targets, it is less successfully used to tell pupils how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the caring support they receive. Positive interventions by the leadership team have ensured that pupils and families recognise the importance of regular attendance, which is average and improving. Allied to average attainment and satisfactory skills in teamwork and in information and communication technology, this ensures that pupils' development of workplace skills is satisfactory.

Pupils have contributed strongly to developments in school and say that the introduction of 'playground friends' has helped to improve behaviour at break and lunchtimes. They have a strong sense of how to help others and a good understanding of life in different faiths and cultures because the school actively celebrates its diverse population and pupils' spiritual awareness. There are good partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex needs. As a result, parents and carers are very supportive of the school and how it encourages pupils' social and moral development.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the current school year, raise pupils' attainment, especially for the more-able pupils and in writing, to higher levels, by:
 - providing more exciting opportunities for pupils to think critically, solve problems and apply their skills, especially in writing, across a wider range of subjects
 - ensuring that data are well used so that work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils
 - using marking more effectively so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is satisfactory. However, their enjoyment is higher when they are engaged in lively activities, such as investigating the building materials in the school, using drama to explore ideas for their ghost stories and working together to explore shapes. They are polite, have good attitudes, form positive relationships and are eager to do well in their work.

From starting points in Reception which are below the expectations for their age, pupils' attainment is average by the end of Year 6, making satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 after a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment in writing is improving slowly, as a result of strongly directed teaching which has a clear focus on basic skills, although opportunities are missed for pupils to write at length and creatively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and they make satisfactory progress because of the sensitive support they receive.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their enthusiastic involvement in dance, cycling and swimming and the high take-up of the healthy school meals provided. They care for one another well, have great respect for each other and for different cultures and beliefs, and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern arising.

Pupils willingly make a positive contribution to the school community, by helping to ensure pupils play well together and through the school council. Pupils support a range of charities and participate in activities with the local church and in initiatives designed to improve the local environment. Average attendance and attainment and satisfactory basic skills mean that pupils are equipped satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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 use interactive whiteboard technology well to offer ideas to support writing and to show pupils mathematical models or historical artefacts. Teachers use skilful questioning to ascertain what pupils already know and offer clear examples of the skills pupils are to learn to ensure that they are well supported in their learning. There is a particularly strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics and homework is well used to reinforce learning. However, in offering this guidance, teachers occasionally miss opportunities for pupils to share ideas and to investigate together. Marking tells pupils how well they have done, but is less successful in telling pupils how to improve their work.

The school has developed resources which have successfully raised standards in reading. It is in the process of developing a range of resources and activities which help pupils to see the links between subjects, offer them opportunities to have hands-on learning experience and develop their skills in information and communication technology. Well-planned enrichment activities and visits, include opportunities to learn about other cultures and the wider world. There are many opportunities to explore the wealth of geographical features which exist locally and the rich historical and religious heritage of nearby Durham Cathedral and Finchale Abbey. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs, which help pupils develop their skills in sporting and environmental activities, including drama and the development of the school garden.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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All staff have detailed knowledge about individual pupils so that they are well cared for and develop self-esteem, respect and a sense of responsibility. A key feature is the sensitive care for the pupils who are from Traveller or Gypsy/Roma families, and for those with complex learning needs. The school has worked hard with families from all backgrounds to support those pupils who are persistent absentees and attendance has risen. Well-established practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and on transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established a clear view of the school's effectiveness and, working closely with the deputy headteacher, has introduced initiatives that have led to rising attainment in English and mathematics. They have developed effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and are developing resources to make pupils' learning more interesting, although these have not as yet had a significant impact on the rates of pupils' progress. In this small school, all staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are accountable for key areas of the curriculum. They welcome these developing opportunities to contribute to decision-making and the school improvement plan and to advance their own professional development. The governing body has been instrumental in supporting the school and has ensured that a decline in academic standards has been reversed through evaluating information about pupils' progress and monitoring subject areas.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory, meet government requirements and secure pupils' safety. It has close links with outside agencies to support the wide range of individual needs of pupils. While there is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided, a focus on helping pupils attain average standards occasionally means that work for the more-able is not sufficiently challenging. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community. There is a good awareness of life in other countries and a clear understanding of Britain as a diverse, multicultural society. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to involve parents and carers in their children's learning, including supporting learning at home and regular information about their children.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a wide range of ability, but children's skills on entry to Reception are below those expected for their age overall, and well below in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. Effective teaching, which particularly focuses on developing writing, speaking and listening, and skills in linking sounds and letters, helps children to make good progress so that their attainment has risen and is now closer to average as they enter Year 1. Adults offer high levels of care so that children feel safe, are confident and happy. They encourage children to share, to take turns and to behave well. Children thrive on creative activities such as painting pictures of fireworks and imaginative play in their wizard's castle. A range of healthy snacks and drinking water, opportunities for exercise and clear guidelines for hand washing, help children to develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are met. There is much useful information about children and their progress and this is well used to provide appropriate activities for children's individual needs. The school makes good use of the existing outdoor area and there are exciting plans for its redevelopment. It has rapidly developed links with the new Children's Centre to ensure that children can have the best possible start to their education. There are effective partnerships with parents and carers that enable children to settle quickly into the Reception class and good arrangements for transition into Year 1.

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

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

The response to the questionnaire for parents and carers was slightly lower than the average response rate in other primary schools. The respondents support the school and its leaders strongly. The overwhelming majority are confident that their children enjoy school. A very large majority are happy with their children's experience at school and how it meets their children's needs, helping children to feel safe and stay healthy. The inspection reflects the view that these are positive features of the school. Most parents and carers believe that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress. While the inspection acknowledges that the school strives hard to achieve these things, inspectors believe that opportunities are missed to give pupils more hands-on learning opportunities and this slows pupils' progress. While most parents and carers are strongly supportive of the way the school informs them about their children's progress and helps them support their child at home, a few express concerns about these areas. The inspection looked closely at this and believes the school is developing increasingly effective links with parents and carers. Most parents and carers believe that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. A very small minority expressed concern about the behaviour of a very small number of pupils. Inspectors investigated this concern in detail and believe that the school is employing appropriate and increasingly effective strategies to support these pupils and minimise disruption to the learning of others.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Rainton 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	63	13	34	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	63	12	32	2	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	50	17	45	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	50	14	37	2	5	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	19	50	17	45	0	0	2	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	39	18	47	4	11	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	53	15	39	3	8	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)	17	45	15	39	2	5	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	47	15	39	3	8	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	34	16	42	6	16	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	39	16	42	5	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	55	13	34	4	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	47	17	45	2	5	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.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Rainton Primary School, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6RN

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you so much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which is improving because your teachers know what to do to make it better. The team was impressed by your behaviour, politeness and the great care and respect you have for one another. You take pride in your work and work hard in lessons. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. Your teachers take great care of you and are trying hard to make your lessons more exciting for you. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

We have asked your school to improve even more, by:

- helping you to reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by providing more exciting opportunities for you so that you have more chances to investigate together, solve problems and apply your skills in exciting activities
- making sure that all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level of challenge for all of you
- making sure that marking tells you clearly how to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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