

# Warren Dell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117169
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338960
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Canham

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jackie Butcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Conlon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Gosforth Lane South Oxhey, Watford WD19 7UZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 24 questionnaires received from parents, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- how successfully the interim leadership team is influencing the rate of pupil progress, lifting performance, and laying down secure foundations on which the school can move forward
- how effectively the governing body is holding the school to account for its standards.

## Information about the school

Almost all the pupils are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who arrive at or leave the school at other than the expected times is above that found in most other schools.

There has been a history of high staff turnover in the school. Following the appointment of two interim headteachers for short periods during the summer of 2009, an interim headteacher and deputy have been engaged to lead the school during the current school year.

Among its awards, the school has National 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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## 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 significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and to governance. The school is therefore given a notice to improve.

Following a period in which there were significant levels of underachievement, a downward trend in attainment and substantial changes to staffing, the local authority identified the school as one that was in urgent need of additional support. A new leadership team was appointed in September 2009 to bring about change and stability. This very strong leadership is the key factor in driving improvement and addressing the decline in standards. Tracking systems have become more robust, challenging targets have been set and staff have been encouraged to develop further their knowledge and skills. One of the early outcomes is reflected in the attitudes of staff, who say that they are well supported and that they now have greater confidence in their ability. The influence of the more rigorous approach and higher expectations is reflected in improved pupil attendance and better behaviour. In addition, pupils now make satisfactory progress, but its pace is not improving at a fast enough rate. As a result, attainment remains low, especially in writing. There are some signs of improvement to attainment, but these are small. The school has a clear understanding of where it is now and of the substantial improvements needed. Governors did not have a clear understanding of the school's fragile position, though they now recognise the need to strengthen their role and hold the school to account for tackling weaknesses and improving standards. Senior leaders' overall awareness and vision are well informed by increasingly accurate self-evaluation and, as a consequence, the school is soundly placed to improve.

A particular strength is the caring and supportive environment, which places a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and developing their confidence. These positive features are reflected in pupils' well developed personal qualities, including their good behaviour and interest and enjoyment of learning. They also have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.

The school places teaching and learning at the hub of improved performance. The school's drive for high quality teaching is evident in the continual review of classroom practice based on close monitoring. Consequently, teachers are beginning to plan lively and interesting activities that capture the pupils' imagination. However, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make the rapid progress needed to raise attainment. Assessment information is not always used well enough to match the tasks to each pupil's ability. Performance activities, particularly singing, are popular and provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their confidence and performance skills.

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While the school is developing links with outside agencies and the community, it also recognises that pupils lack opportunities to appreciate and value people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and around the world. The promotion of community cohesion is lacking in subject planning and when linking learning together across different parts of the curriculum.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise levels of levels of achievement, particularly in writing, by ensuring that teaching includes:
  - planning based on assessment
  - challenging tasks pitched at the right level for all pupils
  - well-paced activities
- Strengthen the role of the governing body by ensuring that governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school more closely.
- Extend the strategy for community cohesion by
  - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from a wide variety of backgrounds and communities, nationally and globally
  - ensuring that community cohesion is included in planning when linking subjects

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

There are clear signs that the school's determined efforts and closely-targeted support are beginning to make a notable difference, resulting in pupils making better progress than they did before. Pupils' willingness and pleasure in learning, as seen in their enthusiastic responses during English, mathematics and music lessons, are typical and indicate the satisfactory, and sometimes good, pace of learning across the school. Pupils thrive on success and work well in small groups and independently of the teacher, and show determination in getting the tasks right. However, the rate of progress remains uneven. There are no significant variations in the levels of progress of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils.

Despite some recent improvement, attainment remains low, with particular weaknesses in writing where pupils have a limited vocabulary and show little confidence in writing for different purposes. The school failed to reach its targets in 2009, when there was a further drop in standards, particularly in mathematics at the end of Year 6. This downward trend is reflected in Year 2, where the drop in attainment in 2009 is even more pronounced. The results reflect pupils' past underachievement.

Pupils say they like coming to school and talk appreciatively of the supportive and caring environment. These positive attitudes are reflected in much improved attendance. Pupils report no bullying or intimidation and show good understanding about personal safety. Pupils also show much enjoyment of sporting activities and an appreciation of music and singing during assemblies.

Pupils' thoughtful behaviour is a key feature in their learning. They are considerate towards each other and are aware of dangers in and out of school. Pupils are polite and courteous, and willingly take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. The

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school council provides good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others. Key responsibilities help develop leadership qualities. Giving support to others is integral to the role of monitors. Supported by the school's projects to encourage enterprise, such as the making and selling of cakes for charity, pupils' personal skills are developing important qualities for when they leave school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 curriculum is appropriately focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, although the full impact of the strategies has yet to be seen. Although music features highly, the school has yet to give greater prominence to the development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education, art and design. Planning includes links between subjects but information and communication technology (ICT) is not used often enough to give pupils regular access to a range of resources and information.

Pupils' experiences are enriched by local trips to, for example, a Roman ruin and the British museum. The school's strong programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils good opportunities to develop confidence and help make well-informed choices.

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The strengths of teaching lie in effective classroom management, good relationships and questioning that probes pupils' understanding. However, teaching is not better than satisfactory because the activities do not always expect enough from all pupils. Introductions are sometimes too long and more able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging activities early enough in lessons. However, recent changes to the way teaching assistants are being used is proving to be effective because those pupils with particular learning difficulties are given closely-targeted support. Changes to teaching and the quality of support are recognised by parents. 'My child has had learning difficulties throughout his time at Warren Dell', one parent reported, 'I'm pleased with the progress that he has made since September and he is much happier and more confident in his work.' Topics, such as those that encourage creativity and imaginative writing, successfully capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and willingly become involved in their learning. Assessment procedures have been considerably strengthened, although information has yet to be used consistently to plan tasks at the right level. Marking is supportive and it usually helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

The good support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and valued by parents. One parent's comments illustrated a particular strength: 'My child is safe at school....and the school is very supportive'. Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected not just in opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of healthy school meals. Individualised programmes of support are made for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, covering a wide range of personal and learning needs. Individual achievement is now effectively managed through comprehensive tracking of attainment and progress. Evaluations lead to focused interventions, which are starting to reinforce pupils' literacy skills and build confidence.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Good and determined leadership has moved the school from a precarious position to one which places it on a firm foundation from which it can further improve. With effective support from the local authority and school staff, the senior leadership team is establishing a school that is committed to lifting levels of achievement and raising standards. Staff have gained confidence in their ability to teach effectively and tackle the levels of underachievement that have been a feature of the school for several years. The school promotes equality and addresses any form of discrimination well. Robust systems have been introduced in all areas and challenging targets are set for the school's work. As a result, attainment is beginning to improve, albeit slowly, and pupils are making better

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progress they did in the past. Staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the areas for improvement and school development planning is very well focused on key priorities. Staff value the professional support currently given by the school and the opportunities for training to help them strengthen their role in the school's improvement. These features demonstrate sound capacity for sustained improvement.

Governors recognise that the school's decline, as seen in the drop in pupils' attainment, should have been arrested much earlier. They fully understand the need to strengthen their role, with the help of additional training, so that they are able to hold the school to account for its standards and for improving outcomes for all pupils. Attention to pupils' safety is fundamental to the school's work and safeguarding procedures are securely established. Local services and agencies are beginning to be used effectively to enhance the well-being of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Community cohesion is successfully promoted within the school, which is strengthening ties within the local area. Links and partnerships with outside agencies are being established. The school recognises that pupils lack understanding of the diversity of backgrounds and communities in other parts of their own country and abroad. Parents currently have good opportunities to give views on the quality of education provided and benefit from regular contact through, for example, a parent forum.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

The recently appointed leader provides strong direction and a resolve to overcoming the difficulties caused by the continual changes to staffing. She has introduced rigorous and robust assessment procedures which give accurate and reliable information about children's progress. This information is now being used to pitch planning at the right level.



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From below expected starting points in the Nursery, children make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress in all areas of learning. However, it is too variable to be any greater than satisfactory. Higher expectations mean that children are on track to reach broadly average standards by the end of the year. Children in Reception are also expected to make similar gains.

Imaginative and sensitive teaching, some of which involves mixed-age groups, captures the children's interests. Well-planned, themed topics ensure all areas of learning are covered, with a particular focus on early reading, writing and number skills. Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are more vulnerable, is good.

The school now makes effective use of the indoor and outside areas, which is beginning to provide a wide range of stimulating activities. Adults give closely-targeted support to activities directed by the teacher as well as those which children choose for themselves. Children are cherished and nurtured from the very start. As a result, they are starting to settle quickly and are eager to learn. Relationships are strengths. Children listen attentively and chatter happily about their work.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parent questionnaires were positive. Just a small number included written comments. These contained remarks regarding positive changes to the school since September 2009, but also concerns about the changes in staffing. Although these concerns were not reflected in the very large majority of parents' comments, the inspection found evidence to support the view that improvements have been made to the school's provision and there has been a very high turnover of staff.

## 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	46	12	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	33	16	67	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	38	14	58	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	21	17	71	2	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)	5	21	19	79	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	13	21	88	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	25	18	75	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	21	19	79	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	21	18	75	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	50	12	50	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 December 2009

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Warren Dell Primary School, South Oxhey WD19 7UZ**

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so very welcome. This letter is to tell you about what we found while we were with you. Your school has gone through a number of changes in staffing, including the headteacher and different teachers. However, it is a place where you want to be, make lots of friends, and enjoy taking part in the interesting activities.

You behave well and get on well with each other. You say that things have got better since September and almost all of your parents are happy with the school. Nevertheless, your school still has a lot to do to make sure you make quicker progress, so that you do well. In order to make sure this happens, the school has been given what is called 'a notice to improve'.

Here are some important things about your school:

- you make satisfactory progress in lessons
- you respond well to interesting activities
- you feel safe and secure in school and enjoy your work
- those in charge of the school are making improvements that are helping you to make faster progress
- all staff take good care of you, and make sure that you know what to do to keep safe
- you have a good understanding of what is a healthy lifestyle and how to eat healthily.

This is what the staff have been asked to do to make things even better:

- help you to make faster progress, particularly in writing, by giving you more challenging activities
- ensure that those in charge of the school keep a closer eye on how well it is improving and how much progress you are making
- help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and the world.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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