

# Wessington Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134532
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	381691
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Cain

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Baggaley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne High
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lanercost Washington NE38 7PY
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<b>Email address</b>	diane.sykes@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Wessington Primary School Daycare
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	70
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	1 October 2008

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers, spent time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and daycare centre and looked at pupils' work. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at documents, including policies relating to safeguarding, the School Improvement Partner's report and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 70 parents and carers.

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

- What is the current attainment and progress of pupils throughout the school?
- Are teaching strategies and assessment, including marking, good enough to ensure good progress for all pupils?
- What is the impact of the school's support for pupils' personal development and how well are pupils prepared for their future lives?
- How effectively does the school manage the day-care facility to ensure high quality provision for children from birth to five years of age?
- To what extent do leaders and managers at all levels contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school?

## Information about the school

Wessington is a smaller than average-sized primary school. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small percentage is from other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has Healthy School status and holds the Activemark. There is on-site registered provision for children aged from birth to three years of age, which is run by the governing body and was part of this inspection. It offers up to 50 places for children. The children's centre attached to the school was not part of this inspection and will be subject to a separate inspection report.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Wessington Primary is a satisfactory school. It has recently seen improvements in key areas. Attainment, while still low, is improving strongly, although boys' attainment still lags behind that of girls. The school's success in achieving improvements was recognised by most parents, carers and pupils in their responses to the inspection questionnaires.

A very large majority of pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly. This is due to robust safeguarding procedures and good, care guidance and support. Pupils contribute well to their school as well as to their local community and they are well regarded in the locality. Attendance is now broadly average and the proportion of persistently absent pupils is close to zero.

The school's capacity for further improvement is good. Accurate self-evaluation has effectively identified barriers to learning and has enabled school leaders to begin tackling these. As a result, pupils' progress is improving rapidly. All levels of school management have been galvanized by the headteacher to drive forward improvement and accelerate pupils' progress. Staff are happy and dedicated and they feel part of an improving school. The school has strong links with parents and carers. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's performance. It is committed and provides robust challenge to the school's senior management. The school has established good links with the on-site children's centre, which are beneficial to both parties in, for example, sharing the premises. This collaboration is very beneficial to the school's childcare provision. The school has established good partnerships with a range of agencies to support pupils' well-being and learning.

Senior and middle leaders are improving the quality of teaching through well-focused professional development but there are still some areas of inconsistency that hamper pupils' progress. In some lessons not all pupils are given challenging enough tasks and marking does not always give enough guidance on how pupils can improve.

The school now has accurate data in Years 1 to 6 to track pupils' performance and establish effective intervention, which is important in improving progress. These procedures are less well developed for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including children in the childcare provision.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment and further improve progress across the school by:
  - providing appropriate levels of challenge and support for all groups of pupils in all lessons
  - providing consistency in marking so that all pupils are given constructive guidance towards the next steps in their learning
  - providing activities to engage the interest and stimulate the learning of boys.
- Establish effective systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including within childcare provision, to assess and track children's progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3
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Most children start school with skills that are well below the levels typical for their age. They make at least satisfactory and increasingly good progress in lessons, where they are keen to learn and work well, especially where teaching is good. Progress across the school is improving securely and quickly. As a result, attainment is steadily improving and pupils are closing the gap between their current attainment and that achieved nationally, although boys' attainment still lags behind that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by effective intervention programmes so that they make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress.

Pupils' overall good behaviour and politeness have helped establish a positive ethos around the school. School data show that very few incidents of poor behaviour occur. Pupils understand the factors that would enable them to achieve a healthy lifestyle but not all have adopted it. They are closely involved with their school and wider community, for example in such activities as planting bulbs in a new local play park and in an environmental clean-up day in the village. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory. In the lessons observed, pupils were developing good social skills as well as growing in confidence and perseverance when tackling their work. Pupils were able to listen and reflect on their experiences but their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity beyond their neighbourhood is less well developed.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3

<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

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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most pupils are well motivated by stimulating activities at the start of lessons, such as work on an alien invasion or teachers' role playing of Sherlock Holmes or a Roman soldier. In the best lessons, the learning tasks that follow are well structured and challenging for all groups of pupils, enabling them to make rapid progress. In one lesson, the teacher quickly picked up pupils' misconceptions and reshaped the task so that they were able to achieve appropriately. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is slower and pupils are not stretched enough because tasks are not sufficiently well matched to their abilities. Teachers' planning is developing in the school and more attention is being given at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to assessment of pupils' work through careful tracking and monitoring. Marking in books is satisfactory but it is not always consistent in giving pupils advice on what they need to do to move to the next level in their work. Learning support is very effective in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make satisfactory and sometimes better progress.

The curriculum is built around themes and topics and these are helping children to make rapidly improving progress. There are also many visits arranged, such as to Vindolanda, to engage pupils' enthusiasm for learning, but not enough is done to encourage the interest of boys, in particular, and hence motivate them to learn. The strength of the curriculum at present is in enhancing pupils' personal development through popular after-school clubs, in performing arts and cookery, for example. Pupils have the opportunity to use computers in some lessons to help them with their English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. Links to allow pupils to move through the school or on to the secondary school are good. They are well organised across a cluster of schools, which means pupils look forward with confidence to their transfer to a new school. The strong links with the children's centre allows pupils to transfer seamlessly to the Nursery class. Each pupil and its family are known to staff in the school and pupils are confident that they will get help from adults when they need it. Good quality support is a key factor in helping those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to succeed. The school's expectations of these pupils are appropriately high.

*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?

Staff have a common sense of purpose which is focused on improving pupils' performance. The school's good self-evaluation identified that it had in the past not been careful enough in matching work to pupils' needs. It is addressing this weakness systematically while recognising that more still needs to be done in this respect. It now sets ambitious targets for pupils and rigorously tracks their progress on an individual basis, monitored by senior and middle managers as well as increasingly by members of the governing body. Staff morale is very high because staff at all levels feel supported as well as empowered to make a difference. Alongside this, there is greater accountability, including regular lesson observations, so that school senior and middle leaders can identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Professional development has focused sharply on accelerating pupils' progress and this is helping staff to track more effectively the improvements pupils are making. The governing body is ambitious and has drawn up guidelines to help governors have a greater understanding of what is happening in the classroom. There are clear links between the governing body and specific classes and subjects. Visits take place to observe lessons in order to help members of the governing body deepen their understanding of the school's performance. The governing body is knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures, which are robust. The school has large numbers of staff trained in first aid and administrative staff showed great care about both identity checks and making sure that visitors were briefed in safeguarding issues. Equal opportunities policies are in place and the school actively promotes equality and tackles discrimination but, as yet, there are inconsistencies in the performance of boys compared with girls.

The school is generally a highly cohesive community where pupils get on well with each other. However, work to promote pupils' wider understanding of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and internationally is less well developed. The school has plans in place to address this issue. It has responded positively to parental requests to secure the future of childcare facilities. The school has strong and effective partnership arrangements with the on-site children's centre, resulting in mutual sharing of some facilities.

### *These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children enter the school from well-below average starting points. They make satisfactory progress overall but they are still below national goals for their age when they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. Girls' progress is better than boys, partly due to the narrower range of activities to interest boys. A strength of the management of the Early Years Foundation Stage lies in the teamwork and strong morale of the staff as well as the shared approaches across day care, Nursery and Reception. In line with the rest of the school, safeguarding is good. Provision for childcare meets requirements for registration on the Early Years Register. The welfare requirements are met and children are managed appropriately. The activities observed for babies and toddlers were of good quality. The provision has its own well-organised breakfast club. The children were sometimes seen to be making good progress. However, the overall judgement for the school's day care provision is satisfactory because, as in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a whole, there is a need for more careful tracking of children as they progress through the unit.

### *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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were very pleased with their child's experience in the school. A very small minority were concerned with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found little evidence of unacceptable behaviour, although some pupils tended to be more boisterous at lunchtime.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wessington 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	67	22	31	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	52	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	54	30	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	57	28	40	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	60	27	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	63	24	34	1	1	1	1
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)	44	63	25	36	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	60	27	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	51	29	41	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	49	30	43	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	42	60	26	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	69	22	31	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> <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.**



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Wessington Primary School, Washington, NE38 7PY**

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you. Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us.

The reason for our visit was to find out how well your school is doing. We found that you go to a satisfactory school. The school does some things well but other things need to be improved. I can see why you get on well with your headteacher and like your teachers a lot. You have a happy school which is improving rapidly.

Most of you enjoy school and you know that everyone in the school cares for you and looks after you really well. The school is thought to be a very safe place for most of you and most of you said that you always knew who to turn to if you had a problem.

Your headteacher knows that your personal development is good but wants to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that you can make faster progress and reach higher standards.

We have asked the school staff to do the following to improve the school further:

- always provide you with the challenging work that will help you to achieve higher standards
- improve teachers' marking so that you have a better idea of how to improve your work
- provide more work and activities that will appeal to the boys to help them enjoy their learning and achieve their best
- check closely on how well the youngest children are doing in their work.

I am sure you will continue to play your part in helping your teachers to improve Wessington.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain  
Lead inspector

