

# Weston Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111114
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	378237
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Byrne

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Nyakatawa
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ros Atkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2010
<b>School address</b>	Lamsickle Lane Weston Village Runcorn WA7 4RA
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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Byrne

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed four teachers and one higher level teaching assistant teaching eight lessons. Meetings were held with members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), school leaders, pupils, parents and carers. The inspector observed the school's work, including analyses of the pupils' books. In addition, the inspector looked at a number of documents. These included those relating to the progress of pupils, the school's development planning, safeguarding and child protection, the monitoring of the quality of teaching, external views of the school and the minutes of IEB meetings. The inspector also analysed 45 parental and carers' questionnaires and those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals has been steadily increasing and is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

Many changes have occurred since the previous inspection. The two resourced units for pupils with special educational needs which were based in the school have been disbanded; all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are now integrated into the main school. In addition, there have been some significant staffing changes. The headteacher took up post in January 2012, after leading the school for 18 months in an acting capacity. An assistant headteacher has also joined and a newly qualified teacher has been appointed. A major overhaul of the accommodation has included the creation of a new Early Years Foundation Stage learning base.

The School has achieved Healthy School status and holds the Activemark and Artsmark Silver.

A privately managed pre-school provision is on the school site and is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It promotes outstanding behaviour and safety, makes excellent provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and benefits from excellent vision and leadership by the headteacher. The school is not yet outstanding because of some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' writing and in their understanding of other faiths and cultures; there is an over-reliance on the most senior leaders to monitor the work of the school.
- Pupils thrive in the caring environment and grow into polite, sociable and academically adept young people. Parents and carers rate the school very highly. One stated: 'The school is happy, safe and very well-managed'.
- Achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is good. Progress is rapid and attainment at Year 6 is above average. Strengths are evident in reading and mathematics. In writing, improvement is under way but standards of presentation, spelling and punctuation are relative weaknesses.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding elements. Pupils benefit from a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which lays a good foundation for future learning. Across the school, imaginative approaches to the curriculum make learning fun. These contribute to high levels of enjoyment amongst pupils and to above average attendance.
- Strong relationships throughout the school reflect the pupils' high levels of spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils' understanding of people of different backgrounds and faiths in modern society remains a relative weakness.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a strong staff team. Excellent links with a nearby high school enhance the development of staff so the leadership of teaching is good. Staff morale is high. Monitoring the performance

of pupils and the effectiveness of staff is rigorous, but does not involve middle managers enough.

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

- Raise achievement further by:
  - ensuring that pupils improve their basic skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Widen the pupils' understanding of the diversity of society by:
  - enabling pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of culture and faith within modern society.
- Increase further the effectiveness of school leadership by:
  - widening the scope for all staff, and in particular middle managers, to monitor teaching and learning.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from broadly typical starting points, as a result of good teaching. By the time they join Year 1, their attainment has increased recently and is now closer to being above average. Children are provided with activities that promote independence while laying good foundations for reading, writing and numeracy.

Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In 2011, Year 6 pupils made excellent progress from the standards they reached when they were in Year 2. Inspection evidence indicates that progress is now good or better throughout the school. Attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Attainment in reading and mathematics are strengths of the school. In Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a good understanding of how to link letters and sounds (phonics). This knowledge impacts positively on their attainment in reading, and increasingly on their writing. Pupils read confidently, fluently and with enjoyment. Their attainment in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above average. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors and respond well to strategies that reward frequent reading.

Action taken by leaders is raising attainment in writing. This has improved and is now above average, but not as strong as reading. Pupils' creative writing is imaginative and they increasingly use words to express in writing their ideas and feelings. Their non-fiction writing is well structured, so it has clarity for the reader. Pupils' enjoyment of writing was evident in a lesson in Year 3/4, when, in an imaginary scenario, pupils created words to describe what it would be like to be in the heat of Egypt. Some pupils, mostly in Key Stage 2, do not have good handwriting skills, and some have difficulty with accurate spelling and the appropriate use of punctuation

and grammar. Most pupils have secure calculation skills in mathematics and are developing quick mental recall. Their proficiency in solving number problems is improving and reflects the good teaching they receive.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress because of the excellently managed and well targeted support they receive. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers. In their questionnaires, parents and carers were unanimous that their children make good progress at the school and their needs are met. This is an accurate view.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers are unanimous that teaching is good. This is an accurate view. Many lessons are scintillating and inspire learning amongst all pupils regardless of their needs or gender. Teachers are aware of pupils' prior learning and ensure that activities build on it effectively. Class management is very effective, so that little time is lost and pupils stay on task. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to plan very challenging lessons. This was evident in a numeracy lesson for Year 5/6 pupils who had to think very hard to generate complex number sequences and patterns. Questioning is used effectively to probe pupils' understanding of the ideas being taught and to develop their communication skills. Marking and discussion is used well to make sure that pupils understand their individual targets and how to achieve them. First-rate work by teaching assistants makes an excellent contribution to pupils' progress, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Excellent relationships ensure that classrooms are friendly and calm places. Teachers effectively use a wide range of resources and techniques, including information and communication technology, to engage and motivate pupils. This was observed in a Year 1/2 history and literacy lesson based on the theme of the Aztecs. Pupils acted out a scene depicting the sacrifice of a human on the temple's altar. As a result, their understanding of features of the ancient civilisation deepened and new and exciting language was generated. Teaching makes a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is exemplified in the high expectations of pupils' behaviour, ensuring they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The use of homework enables pupils to develop their skills of research to find answers to questions they pose themselves. The curriculum is planned well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English. Occasionally, teachers do not always insist that pupils' handwriting is of a high standard.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils, parents and carers are overwhelmingly of the view that behaviour and safety is at least good. Observations in lessons and around school indicate that behaviour and safety are outstanding. A key factor in this are the strategies employed across the school to promote positive attitudes and help pupils with emotional and behavioural challenges. As a result, pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and act responsibly so there is no disruption to lessons. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment in their activities. A good example of this was seen when

children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were lost in a world of their own in the role play area set up as a North American learning zone. Pupils are friendly and helpful to others and, as a result, a welcoming atmosphere pervades school life. They have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, including racism, and say that any such behaviour is virtually unheard of. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation, because they are taught about assessing risks from the earliest age, they also know about the choices needed to live healthy lives.

Pupils' opinions are highly valued. Through the school council, acting as Road Safety Officers and helping others to play in the playground, their views are sought and listened to. There is good empathy with the lives of others and any suffering being caused by disasters such as floods and earthquakes. Pupils work hard to raise funds for a variety of charities.

### **Leadership and management**

The highly effective, inspirational headteacher, supported by a skilled assistant headteacher is central to the school's improvement since the previous inspection. A variety of well thought out and very effectively implemented strategies have brought about significant improvement. These include the effective management of performance and professional development of staff to strengthen the quality of teaching and raise attainment. Excellent partnerships with the local high school contribute towards many aspects of the school's development. Self-evaluation is accurate and gives a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders are increasingly taking responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, although there is scope for this role to be increased. The information gained from monitoring is used effectively to prioritise and plan for further improvement. The school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

The Interim Executive Board (IEB) is fully involved in evaluating the school and highly influential in determining its direction. The newly constituted shadow governing body is ready to take on the governance role after a period of shadowing the current IEB. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. They are comprehensive and ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. The training of staff in safeguarding, particularly child protection, takes high priority. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is at the heart of the school's work and ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning, make similar progress and that discrimination is not tolerated. Leaders track the progress of individuals accurately, although the use of assessment to track groups over time is not refined enough.

The curriculum has many strengths. Pupils have a choice about the themes they study and this adds to their enthusiasm for learning and increases progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted through a wide range of activities in the curriculum as well as during lunchtimes and after school. Their cultural development is enhanced by the opportunity to communicate with a school in South Africa. However, opportunities are not developed sufficiently for pupils to meet and learn about others of their age from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Engagement with parents and carers is good and ensures they are

effectively involved in their children's learning and the work of the school. The view of one typifies that of many: 'We are included in the school through lovely bright newsletters, which inform us about achievements, parents' forums, parents'/carers' evenings and fundraising events and talent shows!'



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



3 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Weston Primary School, Runcorn, WA7 4RA**

It was a privilege to meet you recently. Thank you for letting me join in your lessons, share lunch with you, and talk to you about your work and your views of your school.

You attend a good school. It is very caring and keeps you safe at all times. Your teachers are talented in providing lessons that are lively, interesting and fun. Your achievement is good and has risen rapidly in recent years. Most of you now reach or exceed the average for your age at the end of Year 6. You read well and understand mathematics. Some of you could, however, spell, punctuate and use grammar more accurately, and handwriting could be better. Those of you who find aspects of learning difficult benefit from excellent support so that you can enjoy learning.

Your behaviour and awareness of safety are outstanding. You treat everyone with respect and utmost politeness. Although you willingly help others, your understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society and different faiths is less well developed.

The rapid improvement in the school is due to the inspirational and highly skilled leadership of your headteacher, and staff. A very successful team of teachers has been created. They make lessons very interesting and through exciting topics capture your imagination. This sparks you to want to learn.

Part of my job is to suggest ways of improving your school further. I have asked that more is done to improve your basic skills in writing, widen your understanding of different beliefs and traditions in society and increase the involvement of some staff in checking on how well the school is doing.

You can help the school by continuing to help others and by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne  
Lead Inspector

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