

Westvale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104431
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	395602
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Millington
Headteacher	Gillian Holland
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Straw
Lenford White

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 11 teachers in 16 lessons. They also observed small intervention groups led by teaching assistants and heard pupils read. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They had informal conversations with parents and carers bringing their children to school. Inspectors looked at achievement across the school and examined samples of pupils' recent work. They scrutinised documents including self-evaluation information, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies including those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors analysed 45 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British background and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high and includes well over half of all pupils. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school meets the current floor standards, these are the minimum standards expected for pupils' attainment and progress set by the government. The school manages breakfast and after-school clubs.

The school holds many awards in recognition of its work. These include Healthy School status, Eco-School, International School (intermediate) Fairtrade and Basic Skills award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching and the monitoring of this are not yet consistent. Purposeful and imaginative leadership ensures the school is always improving. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the caring ethos and their children’s learning experiences.
- Achievement is good. From well-below expected starting points in the Nursery class, children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. This continues throughout the school so that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is at least average and is rising, particularly in reading and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support they receive for their learning.
- Teaching is good. The best teaching features very good planning based precisely on the needs of the pupils in the class. Lessons move at a brisk pace, providing challenging and stimulating activities which make learning enjoyable. There are inconsistencies in the pace of a few lessons and sometimes the level of challenge is too restricting to accelerate progress, particularly that of higher-attaining pupils. The rich and rewarding curriculum provides memorable learning experiences.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. They have a very well-developed awareness of how to keep safe. All pupils feel safe and well looked after. Bullying incidents are extremely rare and dealt with effectively.
- Leadership and management are good. The school has a very accurate awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good. Occasionally, lesson observations by senior leaders do not take sufficient account of the pace and quality of pupils’ learning. Members of the governing body are supportive and informed at first hand of school priorities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring a good pace to learning in all lessons
 - ensuring the level of challenge promotes the learning of all groups of pupils and particularly that of higher-attaining pupils
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to be actively involved in their learning and so build their confidence as independent learners
 - observing the quality of teaching, putting more emphasis on what the pupils are learning rather than on the teachers' input.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and understanding that is well-below expectations for their age in all areas of learning. A high priority is placed on developing speaking and listening skills and developing early numeracy. The environment provides a stimulating kaleidoscope of colour and offers exciting activities both indoors and out. Children quickly become engaged in exploring and enjoy a wide range of learning activities. For example, children in the Nursery and Reception classes were fascinated by their 'snail zoo', enjoying role play in 'Noah's Ark', planting runner beans and experimenting with floating fruit. As a result of this rich and nurturing environment, children make good progress and enter Year 1 well prepared for the next stage of learning.

National data for the school indicate that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen in the last few years and that progress in Key Stage 2 is good. In 2011, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average but these pupils had made good progress from a particularly low starting point, including the high proportion with special educational needs. Pupils in Year 6 currently have also made good progress and their attainment is broadly average. They have achieved particularly well in reading, where over half of the cohort have reached the higher Level 5. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is currently above average.

The achievement of pupils of all abilities is good. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted support which is relevant to their individual needs, enabling them to make similar progress to other groups. Pupils develop a good knowledge of how letters are written and combined to make different sounds which enables them to learn new words quickly. Pupils make good progress in writing, often writing at length and presenting their work carefully. For example, pupils in Year 6 have produced impressive work on the defeat of the Spanish Armada, superheroes and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Pupils make equally good progress in mathematics and attainment has risen well this year after a dip in 2011. Pupils in Year 1 were relishing the challenge of improving their understanding of different geometrical shapes and the Year 5 class was effortlessly converting fractions into decimals and then percentages.

Pupils work well together and make good use of talking partners. Sometimes they rely a little too much on the teachers' support and lack confidence in their own abilities to solve

problems. However, they are always willing to try so that they respond well to teacher's questions and concentrate in lessons.

Quality of teaching

A strength in teaching across the school is the positive and supportive working relationships between adults and pupils, many of whom say 'our teachers really help us'. Questions are used particularly well to challenge the thinking of pupils of all abilities. The management of pupils is consistently good and has a positive impact on learning, especially the small number who have behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. These pupils in particular are provided with encouragement, support and praise and are often taught in smaller groups, which allow them to have more individual attention. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress as well as other groups because of the well-focused teaching they receive. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting the learning of many pupils throughout lessons. Where teaching is most effective the pace is lively and pupils are actively engaged in a wide range of learning activities. This was evident in many lessons seen during the inspection. For example, children in the Nursery class were able to explain how the snail uses its tentacles, in Year 1 pupils were tackling descriptions of triangular prisms and later on learning about the history of the teddy bear.

The level of challenge in many lessons is good but this is not consistent. Sometimes activities do not provide sufficient challenge to extend the learning of the highest attaining pupils and the pace is slower because introductions go on for too long. Pupils are responsive to teachers and try to do their best but some lack confidence and become passive, rather than active and independent learners. Marking is careful and thorough and offers praise as well as advice on how pupils can improve. Teachers use the curriculum very well to provide a wide range of learning experiences and to capitalise on pupils' own interests and enthusiasms. For example, boys in Year 5 produced dramatic newspaper accounts of Spain's recent victory in Euro 2012. Trips such as the very recent visit to London, to the Eden camp where pupils learn about the Blitz and to hear the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra all broaden pupils' horizons and inspire some of the best writing. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their view that their children are well taught and make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms this.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The typical behaviour of pupils is good. This is also the view of pupils and parents and carers. Across the school, pupils work and play well together. They have complete trust that adults will sort out any problems and say that they are free from bullying of any kind. The school has a clear code of conduct and sets high expectations for good behaviour to which pupils respond readily. Pupils' good behaviour is rewarded with 'Chance cards', praise and the opportunity to attend the 'Friday Fun Club'. Pupils feel that they have a strong voice in school through the school council. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy making a contribution to school life by acting as play leaders at lunchtime or helping as class and office monitors.

The school records show that incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Discussions with pupils confirm that they have a lively understanding of what constitutes bullying and the different kinds of bullying such as that related to race or gender. All classes have a strong awareness of the rules for internet safety. The learning mentor plays a valuable role in school supporting many pupils and particularly those whose

circumstances make them vulnerable. Rates of attendance have been below average in the past but as a result of a constant focus on the importance of attendance and a good working relationship with parents and carers, attendance is now average. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day with a nourishing breakfast and interesting activities afterwards. In response to requests from parents the school also runs an after-school club. Parents and carers are right to be confident that their children are safe.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Assistant Head maintain a strong focus on raising achievement and improving teaching within a highly supportive and caring environment. Professional development and performance management of all staff are focused on the school's priorities and lead to improvement. The monitoring of aspects of the school's work such as lesson planning, assessment, the curriculum, play time management and before- and after-school clubs is rigorous and contributes to accurate self-evaluation. As a result, attainment is rising steadily in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has maintained good progress since the previous inspection and has good capacity to improve further. However, more rigorous monitoring of teaching is required to help move teaching from good to outstanding. Currently too much emphasis is placed on teaching skills and delivery rather than on what and how effectively the pupils are learning.

The curriculum is rich and engaging. It contributes significantly to pupils' good progress and to promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A striking feature is the 'culture curriculum' in which each class studies a particular author, artist and composer across the year. Pupils could recall many memorable learning experiences such as learning about the Aztecs and receiving the Citizenship Award at the Civic Centre. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own, for example the school's links with a community in Namibia.

The governing body is very involved, monitoring attendance and helping on trips and visits. Members of the governing body use their skills and knowledge of the local community to support and challenge senior leaders. They ensure equality of opportunity has a high priority and that there is no discrimination. The school works very closely with all external agencies to remove any barriers to learning. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and fully meet statutory requirements.

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).

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westvale Primary School, Liverpool, L32 0RQ

Thank you for making Mr White and I so welcome when we visited you in school recently. We saw you in lessons, around the school, outside in the playground and in meetings. You were very friendly and well behaved. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there and your parents and carers agree.

You attend a good school with good leaders and managers. We were impressed by the way you listen carefully to your teachers. You are taught well so that you make good progress and reach at least average standards in your reading, writing and mathematics. You told us that you like most lessons and how much you enjoy all the extra activities that go on, such as trips and visits. We were pleased to see that attendance has risen and is now average.

To make your school even better we have asked the leaders and managers to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. This means that they are planned to include many different activities and encourage you to become independent learners. When leaders are looking at lessons we want them to look really closely at how well you are learning.

We know you will work hard to help them by attending every day. We hope Year 6 pupils enjoy their graduation celebration at the end of term. We send you our very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Lead inspector

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