

Washacre Primary School

Clough Avenue, Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancashire BL5 2NJ

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils do not achieve sufficiently well from their starting points in Year 1 to the end of Year 6. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are too low.
- Pupil progress has been hindered by teaching which, over time, has been inadequate.
- Checks on pupils' progress that have lacked accuracy, and much change to staffing since the previous inspection, have contributed to gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils have not made the progress that they should.
- Although teaching is improving, it remains inadequate because it is not yet strong enough to enable pupils to make the rapid progress needed to close gaps in their learning enough to raise standards to acceptable levels.
- In some lessons teachers talk for too long, reducing the time pupils have to learn, and they are not yet using information about pupils' progress to plan lessons that stretch the more able.

The school has the following strengths

- The inspirational headteacher and strong interim executive board are making improvements, particularly in achievement and teaching, hence demonstrating their ability to move the school forward. However, leaders at all levels do not yet have a clear view of the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' progress is now checked accurately. Those pupils who need extra help are identified and given effective support. All pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- Teaching is improving and a small amount is now good.
- Parents, pupils and staff are all happy with the changes implemented by the new headteacher and fully support her. All staff are working together as a team to improve the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out observations of learning in all classes; two observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, a member of the interim executive board, senior leaders and the teacher with responsibility for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Results from 19 online questionnaires (Parent View), were taken into consideration in planning the inspection. In addition, responses to a parent questionnaire carried out by the school have also been considered.
- The lead inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including: the school improvement plan; the school's data showing pupils' current progress; documents relating to the school's own view of its performance; records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pritiben Patel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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 it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British background. A small number come from African and other heritages. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is nearly three times higher than schools nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after in the care of the local authority.
- More pupils than usual either join or leave the school other than at the start and end of the school year.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares the same building as a children's centre which is inspected separately and has its own inspection report. This report can be found on the Ofsted website; www.ofsted.gov.uk
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils every morning.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection.
- The current headteacher is new to post. She started her duties in September 2012.
- The school's governing body has been replaced by an interim executive board; it will carry out governance responsibilities until a new governing body has been formed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good or better throughout the school and so raise pupils' achievement and speed up their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring:
 - teachers do not talk for too long so that pupils keep their concentration and have more time to learn and think for themselves, and to complete work on their own
 - teachers use the accurate information that is now available about pupils' progress to plan challenging lessons for all abilities, especially the more able
 - teachers have the skills to support pupils effectively with their reading when they share books in small group sessions
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop and practise their writing skills in different subjects
 - pupils have more opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - pupils behave consistently well in lessons without needing regular reminders from staff.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the performance of different groups of pupils
 - ensuring as a matter of urgency that the interim executive board takes steps to appoint teachers with the necessary expertise to lead and manage different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate by Year 6 because pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 1. This inadequate achievement is due to weaknesses in teaching and is evident in pupils' low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and by the time they leave Year 6.
- Progress in Years 1 to 6 has shown some recent improvement but this is not sufficient to have a significant effect in raising standards. No pupil attained the higher levels in their national tests at the end of Year 2 or 6 in 2012 because the work teachers set for them is often not challenging enough. Work in pupils' books show that they do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems or to develop and practise their writing skills in different subjects. This slows their progress.
- Teachers are not confident in supporting pupils when they are reading together as a group. In the reading test set nationally for pupils at the end of Year 1 only a quarter of pupils attained the expected level.
- Some classes have had many different teachers and this had a negative effect on pupils learning. In addition, the checking of pupils' progress until recently has been inaccurate. As a result, it has been difficult to measure pupils' progress. Current information about progress is accurate. It shows that whilst achievement remains inadequate for all groups including pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs, as well as those from African and other backgrounds, progress is starting to improve.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent on recruiting more staff who are providing individual support to pupils who are eligible to receive it. This is helping them to improve their progress.
- Children start the Nursery with skills that are well below the level typical for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher works well with parents from the children's centre so that when children join the Nursery, they are ready to learn. Children make good progress because staff make learning fun. For example, the teacher dressed-up as a witch with a wand and a magic hat to link with their Halloween theme. The children greatly enjoyed this role-play and their enjoyment contributed to their learning about the sounds that letters make. Although they make good progress, by the time they start Year 1 children's skills, knowledge and understanding are below the level expected of five year olds.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time is inadequate. In recent years, teaching has not been strong enough to allow pupils to make up sufficient ground from their below average starting points in Year 1. Too much teaching requires improvement and, as such, is not good enough to help pupils make the rapid progress that is needed to improve standards. Frequent changes in staffing have had a negative effect upon pupils' learning. Currently, teaching, whilst improving, is still not of a consistently good enough quality.
- In some lessons teachers talk for too long. As a result, pupils lose interest and begin to talk and fidget. In addition, teachers teach the whole class for too long instead of allowing pupils to work on their own and complete their work. This slows the progress that pupils make. For example, this was seen in a literacy lesson for younger pupils where they were sat on the carpet too long listening to the teacher. In this session there were not enough opportunities for all to get involved and develop their understanding of what they were being taught.
- Not all teachers are using the information they have about pupils' progress to plan lessons that

stretch and inspire more able pupils to achieve their best. As a result, these pupils are not attaining the higher levels that they are capable of, as is evident in the school's poor performance in this respect in recent national tests at the end of Year 6.

- There is some evidence of improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff are very caring towards the pupils and this has a positive impact on their well-being. Displays in classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils' achievements and create a stimulating workplace for them. The individual targets that pupils have in literacy and mathematics are helping them to understand how much they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback when marking pupils' work. They tell pupils clearly what it is they have understood, and what they need to focus on for next time. Support staff are confident about their roles and provide effective support for all pupils, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties, as well as, the small numbers from African and other backgrounds. Consequently, all are beginning to make better progress.
- Improving reading has been a priority for the school. As a result, better reading books have been purchased, pupils have regular opportunities to read in school and there is an effective programme of teaching pupils about the sounds that letters make in words. All this is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement in reading. However, teachers' skills in supporting pupils when they share books in small group sessions remain less strong.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- This is a caring school. All pupils are valued and treated as individuals. Staff work hard to meet pupils' needs. For example, one pupil representing the view of many, said, 'Our teachers help us when we struggle'. Pupils have positive views about school and their teachers.
- Pupils and staff are very clear that behaviour has improved. In lessons, pupils choose their activities sensibly, there is a warm atmosphere, and they get along well. However, behaviour requires improvement because pupils need reminders to stop talking and listen, for example when the teacher is talking and during assembly times. Not all pupils are able to manage their own behaviour well without regular reminders from staff and this interrupts the flow of their learning.
- The headteacher has written behaviour plans with parents and pupils for those who require extra support with their behaviour. The impact of this has been positive. These pupils are in school and learning when previously they may have been excluded from school. There are no permanent exclusions and the number of fixed term exclusions has reduced.
- Pupils feel very proud when they receive their 'stars' in the whole-school assembly for either good behaviour or working hard. Parents too, enjoy attending the weekly Friday celebration assembly.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Parents too say their children are safe in school. Pupils have an effective understanding about how to keep themselves safe, for example, during bonfire night activities. There is a comment box if pupils have any concerns they want to express. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of different types of bullying such as homophobic and racist bullying. They say that bullying is not a problem in school and when it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly.
- Pupils from different cultures get along effectively. Pupils learn about different cultures in religious education lessons. There are no reported incidents of racism. There is a strong emphasis in developing effective social skills. For example, pupils enjoyed the assembly led by the headteacher where the importance of challenge, support, and the ability to continue when things are difficult, were explored.
- Attendance has improved and is now similar to other schools. Attendance is regularly checked, and the headteacher meets with families who need extra support, to explain why coming to

school every day is important. Behaviour in the breakfast club is good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has rightly earned the trust of pupils, parents and staff. Staff are very happy with the changes the headteacher has implemented because they know the school is moving forward. This was expressed well when one staff member, representing the view of many, wrote, 'I am so proud to belong to this school and can see the positive changes are going to drive the school forward'.
- The evaluation of the school's work is accurate, particularly about pupils' achievement. The headteacher is rigorously checking and assessing important areas of the school's performance such as teaching, planning and pupils' work. She has put plans in place with the support of staff to bring about improvements quickly. As a result, the progress that pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics is improving.
- Regular monitoring of pupils' progress is helping to identify those pupils who need additional support. However, leaders at all levels are yet to develop a clear understanding about the performance of the different groups of pupils within the school. This is currently limiting the level of challenge to some pupils.
- A variety of plans are in place to improve teaching. The headteacher shows good teaching by her own example, strong teachers support weaker colleagues and there are daily checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher is starting to manage teachers' performance more rigorously. All staff are beginning to be held to account for the progress that the pupils in their classes make. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and those falling behind are getting the support they need. Consequently, pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to explore nature outdoors so that they can develop their social skills such as teamwork. A range of visits and visitors add enjoyment to pupils' learning. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and use their mathematics skills to solve problems.
- The improvements being made to teaching and checking pupils' progress show the school's increasingly effective commitment to ensuring every pupil has equal chance to succeed and achieve better.
- Safeguarding meets government requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The interim executive board is made up of individuals who have an excellent understanding about how to improve schools. They provide help and support to the headteacher as well as all teaching staff in relation to improving the quality of teaching. The local authority checks the school's performance closely. However, the interim executive board is yet to employ staff with the expertise to lead and manage subjects to accelerate the pace of improvement further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105199
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	404973

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	132
Appropriate authority	The interim executive board
Chair	Ray Steele
Headteacher	Jenny Haunch
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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