

Werneth Primary School

Coppice Street, Oldham, Lancashire, OL8 4BL

Inspection dates

18–19 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The standards reached in English, particularly writing, by the end of Year 6 are below average and lag behind those attained in mathematics.
- There is not enough good teaching to ensure pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teaching often lacks the pace and challenge to accelerate pupils' progress in learning, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in different subjects. The presentation of pupils' written work is not good enough.
- The marking of pupils' work identifies ways to improve, but pupils are not always given enough opportunities to respond to the comments in order to develop their skills further and extend their understanding.
- Some leaders, including governors, are new to their roles. While they understand the need to boost pupils' progress, they are not yet doing enough to make this happen.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of early reading, including letters and the sounds they make, is good. This helps those pupils who speak English as an additional language to learn quickly when they first start school.
- Recently, the teaching of mathematics has been strengthened and pupils' progress in this subject has accelerated.
- The support for pupils at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs helps them to make good progress.
- Classroom assistants are well trained and work closely with teachers to support pupils' learning effectively.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school. They treat others with respect and are keen to learn.
- Staff carefully check and track pupils' progress, including that of the different groups of pupils.
- School senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and know where improvement is needed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons, including a number of other visits to small support groups, and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and Vice Chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Three responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration as were the school's own analysis of a questionnaire completed by 36 parents. Inspectors also considered the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Blaylock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Hunter	Additional Inspector
Helen Gaunt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Werneth Primary school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It was formed in September 2008 by the amalgamation of an infant and junior school.
- At the instigation of the local authority, the headteacher of a neighbouring school was appointed as executive headteacher from September 2012. This followed the retirement of the previous headteacher and two unsuccessful attempts to recruit a replacement.
- Pupils are predominantly from minority ethnic groups. Almost three quarters are of Pakistani heritage with one quarter of Bangladeshi heritage. For almost all of the pupils, English is not their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is well-above average, although the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- In 2012, the school exceeded the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, by:
 - making sure teachers plan and provide work that challenges pupils of all abilities, particularly the more-able pupils
 - checking pupils' understanding throughout each lesson to make sure the learning proceeds at the right pace to meet pupils' needs
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that pupils have more chance to explain their ideas and move forward in their learning.
- Raise pupils' attainment in English, particularly in writing, by accelerating the progress that pupils make throughout the school by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills and improve the presentation of their work
 - making sure pupils are given opportunities to act on comments from teachers' marking of their written work
 - making pupils' learning targets easier for them to understand and remember.
- Strengthen leadership and management through developing the skills of those new to leadership roles, including governors, by:
 - providing the necessary training opportunities, with appropriate support and challenge, so that they are more effective at checking, and improving, the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although pupils' achievement is not yet good overall, it is improving. Results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2012 were higher than in 2011. In 2012, pupils reached broadly average standards in mathematics. In English, however, standards were below average, particularly for writing.
- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are much lower than those typically expected for their age. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress in language acquisition and physical, social and emotional development. Rich learning opportunities, along with well-organised resources and a balance of adult-led activities and those that children can choose for themselves, help them to quickly improve their language and social skills.
- Although standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are still lower than those seen in most other schools, they have risen in each of the last three years, and significantly so in 2012. Even so, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is below average.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in linking letters and sounds. This is because of good quality teaching. Pupils develop a love of books and learning through reading sessions in groups guided by adults. Older pupils confidently read and explore meaning from the text. They become fluent and expressive readers.
- While most pupils make good progress in reading, and increasingly faster progress in mathematics, their progress in writing is still too slow and they are not doing as well as they could.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is similar to other pupils in the school. Although the standards reached by these pupils in English and mathematics in 2012 were lower than other pupils in the school, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is narrower than that seen nationally.
- Pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need make good progress. Their progress is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed in order to provide targeted support that is well suited to their needs. Interventions to support their learning include a nurture room for creative activities and a nurture group for pupils in Year 6.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching inspectors observed ranged from inadequate through to good. No outstanding teaching was seen.
- The teaching of reading is good. Strong teaching in the younger classes and effective one-to-one support throughout the school means that pupils do not fall behind.
- Teachers encourage discussion to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, teachers' questioning skills are not as sharp as they could be and do not push pupils to think hard or to explain their ideas. This means that class discussion does not always help pupils to move forward in their understanding.
- Where teaching is good, work is well planned to meet the wide ranging abilities of all pupils and teachers are imaginative in employing a range of strategies to engage and interest their pupils. In such lessons, pupils produce work of good quality and quantity. These lessons have a brisk pace and teachers carefully check pupils' understanding and adjust the activities accordingly. This ongoing responsive checking was less evident where teaching required improvement. In these lessons, teachers' planning did not provide sufficient challenge for the more-able pupils or to generate enough pace for pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils present their work to a good enough standard, especially in writing. This is already identified by the school as a priority for improvement.

- While recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are helping most pupils to make better progress than they used to, there is still a lack of challenge for the more-able pupils in both key stages. In some lessons, teacher expectations are too low and there is a lack of attention given to the consolidation of earlier learning. This is holding back the brighter pupils.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable. It does not always tell them how well they are doing or what they need to do next to improve. Where next steps are suggested it is not clear that these have been followed through by the pupils. Although pupils are aware that they have learning targets, not many are able to recall them.
- Pupils are well supported by skilled teaching assistants who work well with teachers; both within classrooms and when supporting specific pupils. Coordinated support for small groups in Years 1 and 2 includes short structured sessions which help pupils to develop confidence in speaking and increase their vocabulary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other, to adults and their school environment. Pupils' positive attitudes in class are consistent with the school's motto 'live to learn and learn to live'.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in paired and group discussions in lessons. They get along well together and support one another in their learning. Pupils learn to behave well because staff have high expectations and they make sure behaviour policies are followed. Disruption from misbehaviour in lesson is rare. However, when pupils do not find their work interesting or challenging enough, they sometimes lose concentration and their progress slows.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They enjoy their lessons and know that their teachers care for them. They are aware of different types of bullying and know that the correct response to bullying is not to bully back but to report it to their teacher. They recognise that 'everyone has the right to be safe and not be hurt'. School records show that reported incidents of bullying are rare, are treated very seriously, and dealt with promptly. There have been no exclusions in the past three years.
- Most parents, and all staff, agree that the school provides a safe and secure environment for children. Attendance has improved and is now average. A range of strategies, such as, awarding certificates for 100% attendance have helped to improve attendance and punctuality.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They are clear about its strengths and areas for development which are set out clearly in a detailed school development plan. In a short time, the executive headteacher has instilled a clear focus on accelerating progress to quickly raise attainment and to build on improvements made in the previous year. This ambition is clearly understood and shared by staff and governors: the highest ranking response on the staff questionnaire being 'I know what we are trying to achieve as a school'.
- The school has made steady progress against the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection, as is seen in the improved attendance and improved standards in 2012.
- Leaders hold meetings to review pupils' attainment and progress each term. They carefully consider any variances in the achievement of different pupil groups. Findings are discussed with teachers and used to identify where additional support is needed.
- In her quest to ensure rapid improvement, the headteacher has extended the leadership and management responsibilities among staff. However, new leaders are still inexperienced and not yet established in their roles. This means that while they understand the need to improve teaching, and to accelerate progress, they are not yet fully involved in making this happen. Plans are in place for these new leaders to gain from the experiences of other similar leaders in nearby schools.

- Leaders check the quality of teaching by observing lessons, looking at pupils' work, and by talking with pupils. Teachers are given clear targets for improving their performance. These are linked to pupils' progress and, in turn, to teachers' progression through the pay scales.
 - The school provides pupils with exciting learning opportunities in areas such as art, dance, media studies and a residential trip in Year 5. Through the 'Forest Schools' programme, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to learn outdoors, such as the 'Freddie the Fox' sessions for the Nursery children. During the inspection, pupils visited the theatre to see a pantomime and Key Stage 1 pupils performed a dramatic production of the Christmas story for their parents.
 - By working with a nearby primary school where most pupils are White British, pupils develop an understanding of other cultures which helps prepare them for life in modern Britain. This, along with the respect pupils have for people of different faiths, serves to tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunities.
 - A former local authority consultant was appointed by the school to provide support in mathematics last year. This has proved effective in helping to raise standards.
 - The school's website is not up-to-date and some of the key information that the Department for Education stipulates is missing.
 - The school's safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been a number of recent changes in membership of the relatively inexperienced governing body, although vacancies still exist. The governors have improved their understanding of their responsibilities and are ambitious for the school. They are supportive and are aware of the quality of teaching and the current school priorities for boosting pupils' progress. Governors make sure that pay awards reflect teachers' performance. They have set challenging targets for the new headteacher's performance and to ensure that the school improves rapidly. Governors know how the school uses the money it receives from the pupil premium fund such as for one-to-one support, the appointment of a Parent Engagement and Development Officer and the subsidising of school trips where needed.
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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	135342
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	402690

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	544
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Colley
Headteacher	Lisa Needham
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2010
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