

North Walkden Primary School

Worsley Road North, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester, Lancashire, M28 3QD

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress has improved since the previous inspection and all groups now achieve well across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do better than their classmates in reading and their attainment is very close to that of their peers in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is never less than good and there are examples of outstanding practice in all three key stages. Teachers plan classroom activities closely with regard to the differing needs of their pupils and they mark work in detail so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants know their pupils well and ensure that they have every opportunity to take full advantage of everything the school offers them. The family support worker ensures that there are strong links between home and school and provides sensitive support to pupils, often on an individual basis.
- Pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning are good and often outstanding. They feel secure in school and are well aware of how to stay safe outside its walls. They are proud of their school, get on well with their classmates and have a high regard for the adults who work with them. In their words, 'The grown-ups are always kind to us.'
- The curriculum meets pupils' personal and academic needs well. Literacy and numeracy are also promoted effectively in subjects other than in English and mathematics. School sports funding is used well to employ coaches in a range of physical activities including gymnastics.
- The exceptional executive headteacher and the talented senior team lead by example and continue to ensure that on-going improvement is the order of the day. Governors are well-informed about pupils' personal and academic achievement and they hold leaders and managers rigorously to account for the decisions they make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to talk about their work before they begin to write.
- Calculation problems in mathematics are not linked often enough to real-life contexts.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped and subject co-ordinators do not yet monitor pupils' progress as closely as they could.
- Links with the local and wider communities are not promoted extensively enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 part-lessons, taught by eight teachers. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed two phonics (letters and sounds) sessions and also heard pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils, including members of the school council. They also held discussions with five members of the governing body, including the Chair and Vice-Chair. In addition, they spoke to a representative of the local authority, the family support worker, a sports coach, pastoral staff, teachers and the senior leadership team.
- They took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day. They also scrutinised 10 questionnaires returned from staff.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at internal and external pupil progress and attainment data and pupils' work in both English and mathematics. They analysed a variety of documentation including school improvement planning, strategies to enable the school to gain an accurate view of its own performance, reports written on behalf of the local authority and minutes of governing body meetings. They also considered information in relation to child protection, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school, but pupil numbers have increased by nearly 30% since 2010. There are slightly more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is high, at more than twice the national average.
- Most pupils are White British and there are few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is an Investor in Families, holds the International School award and is currently working towards Eco-School Green Flag status.
- The deputy headteacher runs the school for two-and-a half days per week, when the executive headteacher is present at the sister school. Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable refurbishment work on the school site and also significant changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new assistant headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment further by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to talk about their ideas before they begin their writing assignments
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to reinforce their numeracy skills by solving problems which are directly linked to real-life contexts
 - developing subject leadership in order that co-ordinators monitor pupils' progress more closely in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Promote more extensive links with the local and wider communities in order to:
 - raise the aspirations of pupils and their families about what they can achieve
 - give pupils more opportunities to engage with cultures and religions which are different from their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children generally enter the Nursery class with skills and knowledge which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. Much-improved phonics teaching, more effective assessment and better use of resources both indoors and outdoors mean that children now make consistently good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Attainment and progress in English and mathematics improved markedly in 2013 and inspection evidence, including lesson observation and scrutiny of exercise books, demonstrates that pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to reach even higher standards by the time they leave.
- Progress and attainment in mathematics are improving apace, partly as a result of the opportunities pupils have to practise and reinforce their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, including science. Pupils are, however, insufficiently aware of how much mathematics is related to everyday life.
- Literacy is promoted well in all subjects and particularly in history. In Year 3, for example, pupils have opportunities to complete persuasive writing after having considered the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they read aloud with confidence and they are well aware of how to split up complex words in order to pronounce them correctly. Standards in writing are now better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school uses pupil premium funding wisely and effectively, to provide more computer hardware such as I-Pads and to employ more teaching assistants to work closely with pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. As a result, pupils supported by the pupil premium do better than their peers in reading. In 2013, for example, they reached over 29 points in this subject, which was much higher also than the national average for all pupils. In both writing and mathematics they were only one fifth of a point behind their peers in school, demonstrating that the gaps between their performance and the performance of others have closed significantly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are both challenged and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, As a consequence, they too achieve well in their studies.
- All parents spoken to and who responded to Parent View believe their children make good progress at the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in all three key stages. However, teaching over time is not outstanding because, although pupils' progress is accelerating and is better than at the time of the previous inspection, it is good rather than excellent.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that lessons, resources and support activities are planned in relation to the individual needs of their pupils. Pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, receive work and activities which are matched to their abilities and to their particular learning styles.
- In a Year 5 history lesson, for example, in which there was a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills, pupils worked individually, discussed their ideas in pairs and groups, watched a persuasive DVD and were also required to give extended comment on the benefits of joining the army.
- Similarly, in a Year 6 science lesson, which was designed also to promote pupils' numeracy and literacy development, pupils were required to complete experiments on gravity and air resistance in front of the class, were encouraged to use subject terminology such as 'prediction', 'validity'

and 'surface area' and also compared their results using the addition and subtraction of decimals.

- In Year 2, pupils used paint tools on individual laptop computers to create animation. They benefited from a colourful and stimulating environment, in which their work is displayed prominently on the classroom walls. Indeed, display across the whole school is impressive and pupils are able to use the corridors and classroom walls as an extra resource for learning.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength and in the Reception class teachers use a range of relevant resources to establish accurate letter formation, reading and also independence in learning.
- On occasions, teaching and learning methods do not always ensure that pupils can make maximum progress in their studies. For example, although the quality of pupils' writing is improving rapidly, they still do not have enough opportunities to share their ideas with their classmates prior to putting pen to paper. In addition, some calculation problems in mathematics are not linked sufficiently to real-life situations.
- Marking is regular, informs pupils of the standards they are reaching and gives them accurate advice on how they can improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There are outstanding elements of pupils' personal development, but pupils' behaviour and safety are judged good overall because attendance is only broadly average.
- Nonetheless, all parents who spoke informally with inspectors, those who submitted verbal comments and those who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe that their children are safe and happy in school. As one parent commented, 'The dedication and commitment to my son has been immense; from the headteacher to teachers, office, lunchtime and cleaning staff, the school is really like a family.'
- Pupils behave well and sometimes outstandingly well in lessons and throughout the school site at breaks and lunchtimes. They respond well to the dignity and respect with which they are treated by the adults who work with them and are keen to learn. In addition, they get on well with their peers and enjoy the many responsibilities they have, as school councillors for example, to help the school run smoothly. Pupils in Year 6 support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and organise some of their play activities at lunchtime.
- Pupils are welcoming and courteous to visitors, open doors for them and show them around the school. They are particularly pleased to show them their work in their exercise books and also displayed on the walls. They are proactive in their work for charity and raise money for children less fortunate than themselves. They say that bullying, including bullying based on prejudice, is rare and that if it occurs it is dealt with swiftly by staff.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, through, for example, the thought-provoking assemblies and the well-planned personal, social and health education programme. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and also benefit from visits to cultural sites such as the Octagon Theatre. Their singing in assembly is a delight to hear.
- Pupils enjoy the impressive display of Indian art on the corridors. However, the school recognises that links with the local and wider communities, with a view to raising aspirations and to enabling pupils to engage more with cultures and religions which are different from their own, are somewhat underdeveloped.

The leadership and management are good

- Teaching, support and administrative staff speak with one voice about the executive headteacher and senior team. They comment, 'They lead by example, support us and challenge us, and make sure that the school continues to improve.'
- Indeed, senior leaders ask searching questions of themselves and others and have put in place effective strategies which have brought about improvements in pupils' progress and attainment

since the previous inspection. They do not, however, rest on their laurels and are fully aware that subject leadership is underdeveloped and that some aspects of classroom practice do not ensure that pupils make maximum progress in writing and mathematics.

- Performance appraisal arrangements are secure. Teachers benefit from a range of in-service courses delivered within the local family of schools and also as part of the link with the sister school. Teachers also value the opportunities they have to share their skills with others and to observe their colleagues teaching, for example, when the art co-ordinator modelled lessons to staff.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well overall and is driven by the emphasis on developing their literacy and numeracy skills and also on providing them with extra-curricular activities which interest them and which raise their self-esteem.
- The Primary School Sports funding is being used to employ sports coaches who visit the school to improve teachers' skills in delivering physical education and games. It has also been used to purchase new sports equipment and to pay for swimming lessons for pupils in Years 4 and 5.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet current requirements and the school rejects discrimination in all its forms. Pupils' good achievement both personally and academically shows that the school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- The local authority continues to provide good support for the school, particularly in relation to supporting teachers on how to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Representatives also observe teaching and learning and give detailed feedback to teachers and senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support the school well and have a good understanding of the school's performance in all areas of its life. They hold leaders and managers at all levels to account with rigour. They are fully aware of the quality of teaching and learning and of how the school attempts to improve teachers' classroom practice. They oversee performance appraisal arrangements and ensure that teachers receive financial reward only if they meet their targets in relation to pupil progress.
 - They analyse and evaluate on a regular basis relevant data in relation to pupils' learning and attainment. As a result, they demonstrate an accurate awareness of pupils' achievement, both personally and academically. They monitor the spending of pupil premium funding closely and ask searching questions of the leadership about the impact of this spending on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

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	105922
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426099

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Pennington
Headteacher	Anne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2012
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