

Windermere Primary School

Windermere Avenue, St Albans, AL1 5QP

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Children in the Reception class make good progress from levels below those typical for their age, and they achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is also good. Standards are rising and are average by the end of Year 6.
- Literacy skills are generally good, and teachers and support staff help those whose understanding of English is limited to succeed.
- Those pupils who are eligible for additional government funding through the pupil premium catch up with their classmates.
- Most teaching is good, and some is excellent because teachers help pupils to think for themselves, and communicate clearly.
- Behaviour is good. The school supports pupils' personal development very well. Pupils are polite and courteous to other people.
- The headteacher and senior staff work well with their colleagues to make sure that pupils are well looked after, and parents and pupils agree that they are safe in school.
- Teachers who design the curriculum make sure that pupils enjoy their work in a range of subjects and extracurricular activities.
- Parents agree strongly that the school is well led and managed. They are accurate in saying that the governors work well with the headteacher and her senior colleagues to make sure that teaching and learning continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make enough progress in their phonics skills, which are still below average in Year 1.
- The most able pupils do not always do as well as they could, because teachers do not always explain clearly enough what pupils of different abilities should be able to do by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers who are responsible for subject areas and for the care of pupils do not play a strong enough part in the management of teaching and learning across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw all teachers teach, in a total of 12 lessons. Three observations were conducted jointly with senior members of staff. The headteacher was observed giving feedback to a teacher.
- Inspectors compared the school’s data with national data for the last three years, looked at books and talked to pupils about their progress in lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, and met with a representative of the local authority. They worked closely with the headteacher and senior staff throughout the inspection, and held discussions with the senior staff and staff responsible for students’ welfare.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They held discussions with representatives of pupils of all ages, including members of Year 6, who lead discussions in assembly.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, and spoke to them about their work. They also observed lunchtime and talked to pupils in the playground.
- They considered written submissions from seven parents and took account of 51 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as talking to parents when they brought their children to school in the morning.
- Inspectors looked at information provided by the school, including its self-evaluation and policy documentation, minutes of meetings, records of behaviour and attendance, and data relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Barraclough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Windermere Primary school is smaller than average for a primary school. The proportions of boys and girls in each year group vary considerably, but there are more girls than boys overall.
- The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to support from the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority, and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is about twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is about twice the national average. The proportion of such pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average.
- Many pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012, soon after the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of lessons in which teaching and learning are outstanding by
 - helping children of all abilities, and especially the most able, to understand how they can show what they have achieved by the end of the lesson
 - making better use of phonics lessons to help pupils for whom English is an additional language to communicate more effectively.
- Improve the opportunities for teachers who are responsible for areas of the curriculum or for pastoral care of pupils to contribute to the management of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Reception with skills below the levels typical for their age. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) and most pupils' reading and writing have improved. They make rapid progress through Reception and Years 1 to 6 so that they leave the school with attainment similar to that of other pupils of their age.
- Pupils are keen to learn. Standards are rising and, in 2013, their attainment at the end of Year 2 was similar to that of pupils nationally.
- Overall, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check (to see whether pupils know the sounds of English) is below average, but numbers are small, making statistical comparisons unreliable when many pupils come to the school during the school year.
- In the light of pupils' starting points, achievement is good. The progress that pupils make from Year 2 to Year 6 is better than that seen nationally, and in writing and mathematics the proportion of pupils making better-than-expected progress is well above average. By Year 6, the most able pupils achieve slightly better than the same group nationally.
- Many, but not all, of the pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium support also make progress that is better than average. The gap between their performance and that of other pupils is narrowing and, by the end of Year 6, they have almost caught up with, or even exceeded the performance of their peers.
- The school accurately identifies the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and provides the support they need. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and all those from other minority ethnic groups make good progress because of the strong focus on developing their communication skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is generally good, and about a quarter is outstanding. There are very few lessons that require improvement.
- Teaching in Reception is good. There is a good balance between activities chosen by children, and those sessions where adults plan their activities.
- The school recognises the importance of helping pupils to communicate as well as possible, and emphasises the development of reading and writing skills throughout the school. Many pupils read fluently by the time they leave Year 2. Pupils who find reading more difficult, including those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported in phonics and guided reading lessons, so that they make good progress.
- Where teaching is excellent, for example in a geography lesson about Baffin Island, teachers make excellent use of resources such as videos and pictures to challenge pupils to interpret information they are given and to solve problems.

- Where teaching requires improvement, however, teachers do not always explain clearly enough how pupils of different abilities should respond. As a result, more able pupils do not always work to the limits of their ability, and their learning suffers.
- Teachers and their teaching assistants generally work well together, leading to good progress for many pupils and especially for those for whom English is an additional language. Occasionally, however, support for pupils whose English is limited does not do enough to enable them to take an active part in the lesson, and they do not progress as well as they could.
- Pupils confirm that they are set regular homework and say that they benefit from it because it is well marked with comments to help them to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school it is impeccable. Pupils are polite and courteous, moving around the school in an orderly manner. They talk to one another quietly and there is virtually no oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language.
- Pupils were shocked by the suggestion that there might be some bullying, and confirmed that they would not even think of letting the school down by their behaviour. School records show that some bullying is reported, but that the staff deal with what there is very promptly.
- In lessons, children are keen and interested, and ready to work together to help one another to learn as well as possible.
- In the playground, pupils get plenty of opportunity to 'let off steam'. They run around a lot, make good use of climbing frames and other apparatus, and play football. Quiet areas where pupils can sit and chat amicably in a woodland setting are well used.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Governors believe strongly that it is important that pupils are not only safe, but feel safe. The site is secure and every effort is made to make sure that procedures minimise the possibility of accident. In discussion, it is clear that pupils and their parents believe that everything possible is done to ensure the safety of pupils.
- Parents praise the school's care systems strongly, and several took the trouble to write to inspectors, detailing the support given to their children when difficulties arose. One said: 'I cannot praise the staff at the school highly enough. Above all [staff] promote the sense of community that makes the children feel that they truly belong'.
- The school promotes well the importance of regular attendance, though there are still pupils whose absence is higher than it should be. Staff have well organised procedures to promote attendance and to meet the needs of parents who find it difficult to relate to school systems. Attendance is improving steadily and is now close to average for a school of this type.
- The school is a fully inclusive community and promotes equal opportunities by monitoring pupils' progress meticulously. Support is given in response to pastoral needs, for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, and for those eligible for the pupil premium.

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment just over a year ago, the headteacher has put in place rigorous systems

for improving the quality of education provided and to raise standards. Her vision for the school is one that is shared by staff, who do everything they can to ensure that Windermere is a successful school that makes the most of its pupils' strengths.

- The progress of all pupils is very carefully monitored, and the school provides high-quality support for those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The governors monitor the use of government funding available through the pupil premium, and ensure that it is used to narrow the gap between the performance of pupils eligible for this funding and that of other pupils.
- The headteacher and her deputy monitor the quality of teaching carefully across the school, and training and support is available for all who need it. The teacher responsible for managing the school's work with disabled pupils and those who have special needs has had appropriate training and ensures that support caters fully for these pupils.
- The headteacher works closely with the governors, and she and her deputy have produced an accurate self-evaluation of the work of the school. They are working successfully together to create a caring and efficient school with a strong vision for the future.
- Additional support by the local authority has helped the headteacher and her deputy to make sure that the curriculum has supported the school's vision as a caring environment, where children enjoy learning together, and are well prepared for the future.
- The impact on the personal development of pupils is strong. Behaviour is excellent around the school and in nearly all lessons. Not all pupils, however, have fully grasped the joy of learning, and teachers have not done enough to create a real enthusiasm for learning across the school in every pupil, by working together with subject and pastoral leaders. These leaders do not make a strong enough contribution to improving teaching and learning across the school.
- The curriculum is designed to support the aspirations of pupils and their parents, and pupils themselves undoubtedly enjoy coming to school, working together on project work and in the many extra-curricular activities available to them.
- Funding, including the pupil premium and sports funding, is well managed. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium have been able to catch up with their classmates, and sports funding has contributed to the development of the school as a community.
- Development of social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' work is strong, notably through many musical and artistic activities. The school develops strong links with other schools through sporting competitions.
- The school meets all statutory requirements, including requirements for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school well and holds its leadership to account through a review of the headteacher's performance, linked to achievement. It approves and ratifies systems to manage teachers' performance, and approves pay increases and promotion only where justified by performance. Governors know their school well, use data well, based on training to understand pupils' achievement. They play a full part in the school's self-evaluation and improvement. They have a good overview of the budget and make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely.

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	117217
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	440328

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Gibson
Headteacher	Davina Raftery
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	01727 853360
Fax number	01727 855878
Email address	head@windermere.herts.sch.uk

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