

# Western Springs Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124125
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340495
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kevin Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Shirley Wellings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Road Rugeley WS15 2PD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 256000
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<b>Email address</b>	office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2010
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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	EY286263
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	58
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons and saw six teachers teach. They also met with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and safeguarding policies. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 27 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils currently in the school, focusing on how well pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have done this year to see if attainment is continuing to improve
- the effectiveness of the new curriculum and how well basic skills are promoted in the creative approach to learning now being adopted
- whether leaders and managers are doing everything they can to raise pupils' attainment as quickly as possible.

## Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-sized school has a well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of which are moderate learning and/or behavioural difficulties. A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school has recently achieved a Gold International Schools Award, a Commitment to ICT Award and the Football Association Charter Standard for schools. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit catering for part-time Nursery and full-time Reception children. There is also pre-school provision, managed by the governors, which caters for up to 58 two- to four-year-olds. There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection including, apart from the headteacher, at senior management level.

**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: how good is the school?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It is improving because the headteacher and governors have successfully kept it moving forward since the previous inspection despite disruptions in staffing and changes at senior leadership level. Key appointments have resulted in better teaching, a shared sense of purpose amongst all staff and a continued drive for improvement. This is eradicating the legacy of underachievement caused by pupils having to be taught by an unusually high number of supply staff (temporary teachers) during their time in school. The school's data, confirmed by lesson observations and analyses of pupils' books, show that the vast majority of pupils will be starting their new year groups in September at a higher level than in the past. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, accurate and well-founded, and its determination to achieve sustainable improvement in all year groups is at the heart of everything it now does. All of this, taken alongside the improvements in attainment and achievement, demonstrates the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, now make at least satisfactory progress. Early indications from national test results are that outcomes for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 this year have continued their upward trend and are now the highest they have been for several years. Pupils in Year 6 have made overall good progress this year, particularly in writing, and satisfactory progress since Year 2, but their attainment is still below average. In Year 2, attainment is now broadly average.

While teaching is satisfactory overall, some good and occasionally outstanding teaching was observed in lessons, which led to good progress by the pupils. Teachers are becoming increasingly better at using assessment information in planning, and to set targets for pupils. However, marking does not consistently help pupils see how to improve their work. This hinders progress in writing, particularly when done in different subjects. In mathematics, much work is concentrated on learning mathematical skills, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply those skills in problem-solving situations in mathematics or in other subjects. When they do, as in an excellent Year 5 session, they show good ability to think logically through the different steps involved.

Children start Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. Although they mostly learn and develop well by the end of Reception, none reach the higher levels of knowledge and skills, although their work and discussions with them show that some are capable of doing so. Observations show that staff promote personal development skills well but miss opportunities to encourage speaking and listening, writing and

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number when children are working independently, and especially out-of-doors.

The school cares for and supports its pupils well, guiding them effectively in their personal development and increasingly better in their learning. As a result, pupils behave well, have good attitudes to school, and a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Initiatives to support pupils and their parents and carers are greatly appreciated. Pupils are proud of their school. They and their parents and carers recognise how recent changes in the curriculum have increased pupils' desire to learn. This has included involving parents and carers in the 'Passion Projects' that extend pupils' learning and personal development, and their understanding of different cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad. The outcomes of the projects are displayed throughout the school and contribute to the stimulating learning environment in which pupils work and play.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take every opportunity to develop early literacy and numeracy skills in Nursery and Reception by:
  - engaging children more often in conversation that deepens their thinking when they are working independently, including out-of-doors
  - checking that children are always learning, particularly if their activities contain opportunities to read, write and count.
- Accelerate achievement in writing by:
  - encouraging pupils to use their literacy skills in all of their writing
  - marking writing wherever it occurs and ensuring that marking always gives pupils clear pointers on how to improve.
- Accelerate achievement in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to solve mathematical problems, in mathematics lessons and in thematic work.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning and progress are improving securely, and there is every indication that the upward trend in results is sustainable. While it has not been possible for Year 6 pupils to catch up fully on learning missed in previous years, lesson observations and analyses of pupils' work show that pupils in other year groups are catching up well. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 4 understand how to use different forms of punctuation and include more adventurous vocabulary in their writing. They are working at broadly the expected levels for their age, as are Year 5 pupils, who demonstrated good logical thinking as they worked out how far they could travel from Rugeley in 12 hours. No significant differences were noted between the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those learning

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English as an additional language.

Pupils greatly appreciate the 'behaviour wheel', explaining how it encourages them to take responsibility for their actions. They relate well to each other and to adults, and know why it is important to eat healthily and take regular exercise. The stickers they receive for eating healthily and having healthy lunchboxes help, as do the wide range of well-attended sporting and exercise activities available to them in and beyond the normal school day. Older pupils teach younger pupils about all of this, for example, running clubs for them. School councillors have conducted their own surveys of attitudes to healthy living and shared the outcomes with the school in their attempt to promote it further.

Pupils willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities, for example, as peer mediators helping to resolve conflict. Pupils report that, as a result, there is no longer any bullying or other form of harassment in the school. The school council provides 'worries' and 'ideas' boxes for pupils to express any concerns anonymously if they wish, and pupils are confident that they will always receive help should they need it. They say, 'If things get to the headteacher, they are really, really serious', and the systems have not worked, but report that this is now a very rare occurrence.

Pupils have a good understanding of cultural diversity. They have a strong sense of equality, and reflect sensibly on a range of issues, discussing, for example, how the school's links with Pakistan have helped them understand some of the differences between their lives and those of others. Pupils use computers well to enhance their learning in different subjects. All of this, alongside their improving literacy and numeracy skills, and their satisfactory attendance, ensures they are adequately prepared for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Staff know the pupils well. Effectively targeted support has improved pupils' attitudes and behaviour, increasing their willingness to learn. Pupils recognise this and praise the way the curriculum and the different ways in which they are taught challenge them better and make learning more fun than in the past. The curriculum provides a good range of well-organised, imaginative opportunities in and beyond the normal school day, that successfully promote pupils' learning and personal development. Topic work brings different subjects together well and successfully encourages pupils to think and find things out for themselves. Visits, visitors and activities such as the 'enterprise day', where pupils 'clocked in' and worked on a production line to produce artefacts that would make a profit at the school fair, all add to this. They also provide many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use and extend their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Little time is wasted in lessons, although occasionally, all pupils have to listen to the teacher for too long, instead of being moved on to the tasks planned for their ability levels. Planning takes account of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing but marking does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve. Too often, writing is not marked when it occurs in subjects other than English, and basic errors are left uncorrected. Pupils are satisfactorily involved in assessing their own and each other's learning, and they know and understand their targets.

Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are supported well. The 'quiet room' provides a sanctuary for pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties, where they can calm down prior to being re-integrated into class. Well-briefed, well deployed support staff and good partnerships with external agencies, contribute to the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and especially where behaviour is the prime difficulty. Good procedures within school, and productive links with other schools, ease transition for the pupils at each stage in their school lives.

The attention given to the care, welfare, health and safety of children in the pre-school is outstanding. Parents very much appreciate the opportunities they have to observe their children and learn from the excellent provision.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The strong leadership of the headteacher, who is fully supported by the governing body and senior leaders, has successfully embedded in the staff a shared sense of purpose and a strong ambition to raise attainment and accelerate achievement. Leadership skills at other levels are still developing as staff settle into the new roles that the revised curriculum demands of them. For example, while ensuring coverage and progression in different subjects, subject leadership does not ensure that literacy, and particularly numeracy, skills are promoted and improved at every opportunity.

The upward trend in the school's outcomes tells the story of an improving school where weaknesses are tackled decisively to ensure any improvement is sustainable. The governing body monitors all aspects of the school's work effectively, and the school makes good use of local authority support to help it improve. Staff have to account for pupils' progress. Challenging targets, based on accurate self-evaluation, reflect the improvements seen in teaching and learning.

The school works closely with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are good. The school uses them well, for example, to identify families facing difficulties and point them to where they can get help, and to provide frequent updates for pupils and parents on internet safety.

While gaps in learning between different groups are closing, there are some older pupils who have not yet caught up on past underachievement. Nevertheless, equality of opportunity is assured in all of the school's work. It extends to the successful promotion of community cohesion, which is based on the school's secure understanding of its own context and the productive links it has with different schools in this country as well as in France, Germany and Pakistan.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective induction procedures and good links with parents ensure that children settle well in Nursery and Reception. Nursery children find difficulty sharing equipment but staff patiently help them to understand the importance of doing so. By the time they leave Reception, the children mostly do this well. There is a good balance between adult directed activities and those the children can select for themselves. However, when children are working independently, staff do not always interact with them enough to ensure that they are learning as they play. When they do, the conversations do not always extend children's learning or encourage them to think and find things out for themselves. Nevertheless, children enjoy learning, they are curious and they want to learn more. Some of the activities prepared for them contribute to this, for example, being able to watch the life cycle of the butterfly at first hand. The excitement, awe and wonder this engendered was almost tangible.

Staff carefully assess and record children's learning, and attention to the children's health, safety and welfare is good. Assessment information is used satisfactorily in planning but activities are not always broken down to meet the needs of individual children, and opportunities to move more able children on faster are not always taken. For example, although demonstrating good ability to write complete, legible and correctly punctuated sentences, children were not moved on to writing simple stories and reports. This age group is under temporary leadership and management at present, with changes due for September.

In the pre-school, children have many excellent opportunities to explore their world and develop early personal development skills. They are successfully encouraged to try out and extend their physical and creative skills on the wide range of large play equipment in the well resourced outdoor area. Indoor provision is equally stimulating, and, indoors and out, individual work with key workers ensures children also develop very early reading, writing, number and ICT skills in a fun, exciting way.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Less than 20% of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. All of those who did, and those to whom inspectors spoke during the inspection, report that their children enjoy school and are kept safe there. Comments typically centred on the helpfulness of the staff, the care and understanding shown to pupils and their parents, and opportunities being provided that otherwise their children would not have had.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Western Springs Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	56	12	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	67	9	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	41	16	59	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	59	9	33	1	4	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	15	56	10	37	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	59	10	37	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	41	15	56	1	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	52	11	41	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	48	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	44	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	44	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	52	11	41	2	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Western Springs Primary School, Rugeley, WS15 2PD

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. What a delight it was to hear about all the exciting things you do there. Your school has come a long way, and your learning and progress are improving. We found your school to be satisfactory, but the good progress that we are starting to see in different year groups shows that what the school's leaders and managers have put in place to help you do better, is beginning to work. It is good to see that you and your parents recognise this as well and are very proud of the school. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and it is good to see that older pupils help younger ones to learn about all of this. All the extra work you willingly do in and outside of lessons underpins the good contribution you make to the school and wider community.

Those who lead and manage the school are working very hard with all of the staff to help you make faster progress than you do now. They rightly want you to reach higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by Year 6, and have identified ways to do this. We are recommending that, in order to help, they concentrate on ensuring that staff:

- take every opportunity to help Nursery and Reception children develop good literacy and numeracy skills
- encourage all of you to use your literacy skills in all of your writing, and correct your writing in all subjects
- help you to solve mathematical problems faster and give you more opportunities to practise your mathematical skills within your topic work.

You can help by listening carefully to your teachers and remembering to use what you learn in literacy and numeracy lessons when you have to do any work that involves using these skills in other lessons. We hope you continue to enjoy learning throughout your lives as much as you do now, and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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