



North Walkden Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 105922
LEA Salford
Inspection number 277443
Inspection dates 15 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sarah Drake CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Worsley Road North
School category	Community		Walkden
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Worsley, Manchester M28 3QD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 571 039
Number on roll	166	Fax number	01204 579 424
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bernard Pennington
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Cassidy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

North Walkden is a small school serving an area to the north west of Salford. Most families live in rented accommodation and the proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is about twice the national average. Broadly average numbers have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The great majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity. Mobility is higher than average and almost half the current Year 6 did not start their primary education at the school. The headteacher took up post in April 2003 and the deputy headteacher in September 2004. The school holds the bronze Eco-school award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which strong leadership is bringing about good improvement. This agrees with the school's own evaluation. It knows itself well because there are now strong systems in place that identify strengths and areas for development, based on detailed analysis of pupils' achievements. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has strengthened and pupils now use their improving writing skills across a range of subjects. Standards are rising, although are below average, and pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. The progress of Key Stage 1 pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Teachers plan interesting activities and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well, although they do not always adapt the work suitably for different pupils' ability levels.

The school operates as an orderly, happy community where pupils behave well.

From the youngest upwards, pupils' personal development is good. There is a good range of extra activities but this is the first year of mixed age classes and the curriculum does not yet ensure that pupils in each age group receive the required coverage. The quality and standards in the newly developed Foundation Stage unit are satisfactory, although assessment for these youngest children is not yet sufficiently detailed and informative for teachers. Good quality care, guidance and support mean that pupils feel comfortable in school and can concentrate well on their learning. Good partnership with other schools, agencies and parents enhances the overall provision. The school provides satisfactory value for money. With good improvement since the last inspection, leadership providing a clear focus and strong management systems, there is good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing work that is suitably gauged to match the abilities of all pupils in the class.
- ensure that curriculum planning caters for the needs of pupils in mixed age classes.
- improve the quality of assessment in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with particular weaknesses in their communication and personal development; overall, their skills are below expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and the majority enter Year 1 with skills that are still below expectations.

In the 2005 statutory tests, Year 2 pupils reached well below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, with particularly weak performance at the higher levels. Year 6 pupils gained slightly below average standards in English, mathematics and science. This was a significant improvement on the previous three years during

which standards declined and pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. The school reached its targets, exceeding them for the expected level.

Improvements in the quality of teaching and, particularly, the quality and use of assessment are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. Older pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, in part due to gaps in their prior learning. However, pupils of all ages make good progress in writing and the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in Years 1 and 2 is now good. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on track to reach their targets in the 2006 tests, with Year 2 pupils' standards likely to be higher than those of 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children's personal skills develop well in the Foundation Stage so that the school operates as a happy, orderly community in which pupils enjoy learning and develop good relationships. Their pride in their school is summed up by one pupil's writing, 'The school has got the power to sparkle like a star in the sky'. Pupils behave well and act safely. Those with good knowledge of the school comment on recent improvements in behaviour, with pupils responding positively to staffs' reminders and example. Attendance and punctuality have also improved and are now satisfactory, although those of a few families still cause concern.

Pupils regularly reflect on how they can contribute to their own and others' well-being and also frequently use their senses to, for instance, enrich the quality of their writing. Assemblies are uplifting occasions, filling pupils with the realisation that they do matter and can achieve. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities and they carry them out well. The school council has effected improvements in the playground and all pupils contributed to refurbishment of the local park. Pupils are environmentally aware and know how to live healthily. Their appreciation of other cultures is not yet as strong as other areas of their development. With their enjoyment of learning and good ability to work collaboratively, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teaching is lively, well informed and includes a range of approaches that stimulate pupils' interest. All teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to capture pupils' interest and move the lesson on apace. They promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well, for instance, inviting them to generate ideas with their 'talking partners'. Teaching assistants provide skilled help, usually to pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties but occasionally to those with gifts and talents. In less effective, albeit satisfactory, lessons, the quality of learning slips when the pace is not brisk enough, tasks are too

ambitious for the age and ability of pupils or there is too little difference between the levels of work given to different groups of pupils.

Assessment of pupils' work is strong since it has been a focus for professional development. Individuals' progress is rigorously monitored. Teachers share with pupils the information gained through this and help them assess how much they have learnt. In some classes, pupils indicate their level of confidence and increased understanding by drawing faces with different expressions at the end of their work. The recently established Foundation Stage Unit has yet to embed such comprehensive assessment procedures.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, rather than good as the school judges it to be. There is appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science. The focus on developing pupils' writing is paying dividends and pupils competently apply their rapidly developing skills in other subjects. Improvements in ICT resources and teachers' confidence to use them, mean provision for this subject is now satisfactory. Specialist teaching in physical education, music and Spanish, combined with many extra clubs, sports and outside visits, ensures that pupils receive a rounded education. They particularly enjoy such activities. Personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to pupils' capacity to stay healthy and safe. In this first year when the school has had mixed age classes, staff have worked hard to adapt their planning suitably. Although this ensures that subjects are covered in sufficient depth over a year, long term planning is not yet in place that takes full account of the needs of pupils within the two year groups. This forms part of the school development plan.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. One pupil's comment that, 'Teachers listen to you and help you, especially when you are hurt', bears out how well the school looks after them. Close monitoring and guidance of behaviour, together with positive and effective action related to the rare incidents of bullying or racism, ensure that pupils feel at ease in school. Procedures to ensure health and safety and child protection are fully in place and staff understand well their responsibilities. They are both sensitive and vigilant with vulnerable pupils and quick to work with outside agencies when necessary. Effective individual education plans support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or particular gifts and talents. Careful attention helps pupils, many of whom arrive partway through their education, to settle swiftly into school and staff work hard to ensure that the transfer to secondary education runs smoothly. Literacy and numeracy targets motivate pupils well and they are confident about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good quality leadership and management are helping the school to turn the corner from a weak position to one of improving standards, achievement and pupils' overall well-being. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and the necessary skills to put her vision into practice. The assessment and monitoring systems that she has introduced are the foundation on which the school's good improvement is based. Analysis of the information guides the school's forward planning which is directed firmly towards raising pupils' levels of achievement. She is ably supported by the deputy head who has successfully guided the improvements in ICT provision. The Foundation Stage and subject leaders are taking increasing responsibility for their areas, working in teams and monitoring provision and standards in their areas. Access to training is good, based on areas for development highlighted through classroom and other monitoring. There is a strong sense of purpose in the school and a good team spirit that is directed to helping each pupil feel valued, included and to achieve their best. The overwhelming majority of parents are very positive about the school and appreciate the good efforts that staff make to involve them in their children's learning through, for example, providing termly progress reports and regular workshops where they can work alongside their children. The school runs smoothly and has coped well with the financial difficulties brought about by the reduction in pupil numbers. Governors use well the increasing amounts of information provided for them to fulfil their role of critical friend.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Mrs Drake and Mrs Welch Thank you for welcoming us into your school and being so ready to talk with us. Your views are very important because you are the real experts about what it is like to be a member of North Walkden Primary.

Here is a list of things that we particularly like about your school:

- you enjoy school and get on well with each other and staff members
- you behave well and staff deal well with any incidents that do occur
- you try hard and know how to improve your work
- your writing is developing well and you get plenty of chances to practise your speaking and listening skills
- your teachers have a very clear idea of how much progress you are making
- your headteacher and other senior staff have good knowledge of how to improve the school and help you achieve higher standards of work.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do next to make your school even better:

- make sure that they organise work that suits the different abilities of all the pupils in the class
- make sure that, as you move through the school, you cover all the subject areas that you should
- to improve the quality of assessment for the youngest pupils.

Your job is to continue to enjoy learning and try your best.