

Webster Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105482
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308863
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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 on roll	
School	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Bell
Headteacher	Mr J Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Denmark Road Greenheys Manchester Lancashire M15 6JU
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area with a high degree of social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high. Over half of the pupils are refugees or asylum seekers, mainly from Somalia, and many have received no formal education when they arrive at the school. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is very high compared to that in most schools. The number with learning difficulties is close to average. Many pupils join and leave the school at various points throughout the year. The school has Gold Healthy School status and has been awarded the Local Authority Gold Inclusion Mark and the International Schools Award. A new headteacher was appointed in February 2007 and the deputy headteacher took up her post in May 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils of all abilities achieve well. Parents think highly of the school and, in particular, the good levels of care, guidance and support provided for their children. They appreciate the friendly attitudes of staff, saying they are easy to approach, always enthusiastic and happy to help.

Although standards are well below national averages, there are clear signs of improvement. Over the last four years there has been a steady upward movement in standards at Year 6. When the performance of these oldest pupils is compared with the levels they reached at the end of Key Stage 1, they have made good gains in learning. This improvement reflects the continual drive to raise standards in the school and the hard work that has gone in to making learning interesting and relevant for pupils. School tracking data show that this improvement is being maintained and the present pupils are making good progress. However, at Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough and have been on a downward trend over the last four years. Although standards are affected greatly by the high number of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, too few reach the levels expected nationally.

A strength of the school is the way it works hard to meet the needs of all its pupils and ensure equality of opportunity. From the Foundation Stage onwards, close attention is given to stimulating pupils to want to learn by making the curriculum relevant and interesting. This concern is reflected in the enthusiasm shown by the vast majority of pupils, who are all keen to explain how much they like school. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good and an important factor in their good achievement. The close attention given to their personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) results in pupils showing increasing maturity as they go through the school. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and respond by behaving well, saying they like the way teachers help them to learn. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but there are inconsistencies. In the best lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn because teaching is lively and activities interesting. Less successful lessons are marked by pupils demonstrating less interest as explanations become too lengthy and activities lack challenge. Teachers are working together to improve teaching by watching each other and sharing ideas, but more remains to be done.

Good leadership and management are key factors in the school's success. The new headteacher presents a good role model and has quickly instigated changes that have been appreciated and supported by the staff. Excellent links with the wider community and other schools, including international links with schools in Palestine, Spain and Kenya, successfully enhance the learning opportunities presented to pupils. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and areas needing development because senior staff monitor its performance well, but subject coordinators' monitoring role is not well developed. Governors provide satisfactory support and challenge to the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and, taking into account the leadership of the headteacher and strong team approach evident in the school, there is a good capacity to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is lively and stimulating and the rich curriculum gives close attention to all areas of learning. Good use is made of assessment information in providing a range of learning opportunities, both teacher directed and chosen by children. Close attention is given to social development so that children quickly develop good learning habits and learn to work and play together amicably. They move to their tasks enthusiastically and explore a wide range of activities to develop their skills. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and, although the Nursery class and Reception class are in different parts of the building, planning is well coordinated. For example, the Reception children make use of the Nursery's good outside provision and older Nursery children work with a literacy group in the Reception class. When they enter the Nursery, the skills of the vast majority of children are very much below national expectations. They make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. They clearly enjoy their learning in the lively, stimulating environment. However, the difficulties many children face with learning English as an additional language impacts adversely on standards so that by the time they leave the Reception class, most still do not reach the national expectations for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching by raising it to that of the best.
- Develop the monitoring role of subject coordinators.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. On entry to the school most pupils have very low level skills and many speak no English. The high number of pupils who enter the school during the year, often with little experience of formal education, impacts adversely on standards. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress, but the difficulties they face with language are reflected in the well below average standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. Over the last four years standards in the national tests at Year 6 have risen steadily, albeit from a very low level. In 2007, standards in English were well below national averages. However, those in mathematics and science rose to levels that were close to national averages in mathematics and in line with national averages in science. The work of the current pupils indicates that this improvement is continuing. Pupils with additional learning needs and those from the wide range of different minority ethnic groups make good progress because their needs are identified accurately and they are supported well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning, rating the school highly. This is reflected in the way that attendance has improved recently to a level that is outstanding compared with other local schools. Pupils really enjoy the regular use of praise and certificates for good attendance, which has been a major factor in this improvement. Their behaviour is good and they show care and concern for others, well illustrated by the way that 'playground

friends', give good support to younger pupils on the playground. They learn to value one another's views and opinions through the many opportunities they are given to discuss issues in pairs and groups, and appreciate the way that the school takes their views into account. The school council members talk proudly of how they had an influence in obtaining new games pitches and security fencing. Pupils' respect for other cultures is good, reflecting the school's links with schools in other countries and recent achievement of the International Award. Pupils show a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, taking the healthy options at lunchtime and participating in a wide range of physical activities. Their good inter-personal skills and reasonable basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet pupils' needs. Good relationships and the teachers' caring approach generate positive attitudes to learning in pupils. Consequently, they behave well in lessons and clearly enjoy their learning. Classrooms are, consequently, quiet, industrious places. The most effective lessons are marked by tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities, teaching that stimulates them and activities that enable them to work together and share their ideas. The good use of interactive whiteboards excites pupils and lessons move at a good pace. Occasionally, lengthy explanations and tasks that are not challenging enough result in pupils starting to fidget and learning slows. Teachers make good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress. Learning support staff are well deployed to ensure that those pupils with additional learning needs, and the many learning English as an additional language, make equally good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are very positive about their learning experience and the wide range of interesting activities presented in the good curriculum. Close attention is given to the basic skills in English and mathematics. Other subjects are also covered well and there are developing links between subjects, which make learning more relevant to pupils. A recent innovation has been the use of the 'Success for All' programme, which is giving a strong focus to meeting pupils' needs in literacy. A wide range of sports clubs and physical education lessons supports the pupils' healthy attitudes. Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum well. Celebrations of festivals from different faiths, links with schools in other countries, the teaching of Spanish and the wide range of languages evident in the school enhance the rich culture of the school. The good PSHCE programme supports pupils' personal development effectively and residential visits provide opportunities for them to become increasingly independent and to take on personal challenges.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places great importance on ensuring that all pupils are treated equally and are encouraged to achieve. Staff know pupils very well and work effectively with parents to ensure that the level of pastoral support provided is very good. Pupils from each of the many minority ethnic groups are cared for very well and the school is rightly proud of its Gold Inclusion Award.

Pupils with additional learning needs benefit well from the extra support supplied by the teaching assistants. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well looked after and the school works in extremely close partnership with a range of agencies to support them and their families. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous. Pupils are given satisfactory quality academic support and guidance. They value the help they are given through the teachers' marking of their work, which helps them understand how they can improve, but the use of individual targets is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, is providing a clear educational vision and strong direction to the school. Their determined lead on initiatives to improve its work and raise standards is appreciated by all the staff. A revised management structure has been drawn up and staff have accepted their new roles enthusiastically. A strong team approach has resulted, with a shared commitment to raising the standards attained by pupils. Parents are very pleased at the progress made by their children and the way the school involves them in their learning. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures accurately identify the school's strengths and areas requiring development, although subject coordinators are not sufficiently involved in the process. Governors are very well led by the committed chair, who demonstrates a high level of involvement in the life of the school. A number of governors are recent appointments and their monitoring role is not well developed.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views of your school. You said how much you enjoyed school. We agree that it is a good school.

We particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take such good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so that you do well. The wide range of activities that they plan for you impressed us, particularly the links you have made with other schools in Spain, Kenya and Palestine. Many of you told us how much you liked your teachers. This is clearly evident in the way you work hard for them and is the main reason that you make good progress and achieve well. We were impressed with your behaviour in lessons and the way you play together so well at playtimes. Your attendance is much better than that of children in many other schools. Well done! It was also pleasing to hear how aware you were of the importance of a healthy diet and the need to take part in physical activities so that you keep fit and healthy, when we talked to some of you.

There are some things the school needs to do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and staff to work hard to help you reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2. We want them to make all teaching in the school even more stimulating, to help you learn faster. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you were doing in the lessons we observed. Finally, we have asked the teachers in charge of subjects to keep checking how well you are doing in order to determine how they can help you do even better.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. You are very lucky to go to such a good school.