

Waterloo Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106211
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309053
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Smith

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	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Ironmonger
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Worthington Street Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL7 9NA
Telephone number	161 3301280
Fax number	161 3391032

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average in size. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Although the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, almost a fifth of the pupils are of other cultural backgrounds; largely Pakistani but also smaller numbers of pupils with Indian, Polish, African, Chinese or mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is close to the national average, although only a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The school has recently suffered extensive fire damage and the turnover of staff has been unusually high over the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Despite setbacks caused by the fire and staff changes, satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. The difficulties are almost over and the school is now moving forward strongly. Currently, the school's effectiveness and value for money provided are satisfactory. However, a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses has emerged and staff are working together effectively to eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching and achievement. This is what gives the school its good capacity for improvement. At the heart of the school's work is an excellent level of pastoral care and support, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. Good links with parents and outside agencies ensure that pupils are safeguarded and barriers to learning are largely removed. These factors underpin pupils' good personal development, particularly their cooperative behaviour and sense of responsibility. The good curriculum ignites their enjoyment of school, encouraging them to give of their best. The vast majority of parents hold the school in high regard. Comments such as, 'The school is welcoming and children are safe and happy,' typify the views of most parents.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Although many children begin school with low attainment, standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and Year 6 in English and other subjects. However, achievement is not equal in all year groups. For example, pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigation skills in science do not develop evenly. The school is working hard to remedy this by ensuring that assessments are accurate and that essential skills are not duplicated or omitted. This is why achievement is improving. That said, senior staff know that there are still inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Teaching is satisfactory and there are many examples of good teaching. However, the extent to which teachers mark pupils' work constructively and set targets for them to improve is better in some classes than others. Consequently, not all pupils are equally well equipped to contribute to their own learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good leadership provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has raised aspirations and united staff in common purpose. Senior leaders check the work of the school carefully, which is why the school's self-assessment is largely accurate. Inspection findings differ from the school's views in only two instances. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and not good as the school assessed it to be. This is because Reception children do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and learn for themselves. The school also judged pupils' achievement to be good. For many pupils it is, but not yet for all. Some of the inconsistencies arise because subject leaders do not visit different classes to check whether their recommendations are being implemented successfully. Senior leaders are currently taking steps to strengthen the process.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with attainment below that expected for their age. In some year groups it is well below, particularly in literacy and personal development. Good teaching in the Nursery raises children's achievement. These children have many stimulating opportunities to explore and learn by themselves and adults intervene well to extend their spoken language. Consequently, by the end of the Nursery year, children's personal development is typical for their age and their literacy and numeracy skills are gaining ground. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory, although much of the teaching of the whole class and groups is good.

This is why children achieve well in reading and understanding of numbers. However, achievement in other aspects of learning is restricted by a lack of space, time and scope for children to select their own activities and follow their interests. Although by the end of Reception, attainment is broadly at the levels expected in some elements of literacy and numeracy, aspects of their personal, creative and physical development have not moved on to the same degree. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The process of assessing children's learning has undergone radical review to ensure it is accurate. This is leading to a better match between the activities provided and children's different learning needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that Reception children have sufficient opportunities to explore and learn for themselves.
- Ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work in every class.
- Ensure that subject leaders check that agreed improvements are fully implemented across the school so as to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching, learning and achievement, especially in mathematics and science.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Previous standards appear to have been above average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. However, the school has improved the accuracy of its assessments to give a more realistic picture and current standards in the Year 2 are broadly average in all three subjects. Pupils' achievement from Year 3 onwards is satisfactory and good in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, pupils achieve well in English, particularly in writing where very effective teaching has raised standards to above average levels.

Achievement in mathematics and science from Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Although pupils have good knowledge in these subjects, their capacity to investigate, reason and solve problems is not built up systematically and this limits their achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties, those at an early stage of learning English and more able pupils all make at least satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils behave well, understand and respect cultural differences and work and play together harmoniously. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and diet and how to keep safe from dangers such as drugs. They strongly resist any form of bullying or racism, which is why such incidents are rare and the school is calm and friendly. Pupils relish opportunities to make decisions and act very responsibly in their roles as school counsellors and playground leaders. Enjoyment of school is widespread and attendance broadly average and improving in response to reward systems. Pupils' secure literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and social skills are helping to secure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although much of the teaching is good, there are inconsistencies which hold back pupils' learning. For example, whilst marking pupils' work and setting improvement targets are good in some classes, they are not well established in others. Consequently, not all pupils understand how they can improve their learning. In English and mathematics, assessment is used well to identify pupils' different learning needs and provide tasks at the right level. This helps all pupils to learn successfully. However, assessment within the lesson, for example, to identify and remedy pupils' misunderstanding in mathematics, is variable. This is because, although teachers ask probing questions, they do not always ensure that all pupils understand, for example, by asking them to hold up their answers on whiteboards. This makes it harder to adjust the pace of the lesson to match the rate of learning. The strengths in teaching are evident in the good management of pupils, the use of ICT to help them visualise difficult ideas, and the way teachers ensure that pupils understand what the lesson is about. Consequently, pupils concentrate and try hard.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has good depth, breadth and variety to promote enjoyment in learning and to meet pupils' different needs and interests. Despite this, there are limited opportunities for pupils to acquire independent learning skills. A strong thread of personal, social and health education raises pupils' awareness of safe and healthy lifestyles. The wide range and variety of additional activities, including sport and the arts, helps pupils to develop interests and nurtures their talents well. The curriculum is being adapted well to cater for pupils with learning and language needs. This is already reflected in their improving achievement in English. Employing bilingual adults to support pupils learning English is a major step forward in meeting their specific needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements for health and safety, including child protection, are well established. Risk assessments are carried out conscientiously to ensure safety in and out of school. Good links between teachers, parents and health professionals are successful in raising vulnerable pupils' self-esteem, which helps them to learn. Pastoral guidance is outstanding and a major factor in pupils' good personal development. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and where it falters, good support swiftly follows. However, ensuring that pupils become skilled in assessing and improving their own learning is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are effective leaders. Their desire to move the school forward, by an honest analysis of where it can improve, is paying dividends. Senior leaders

know the school well. Their evaluation is guided by diligence in observing lessons, analysing assessments, checking pupils' work and consulting parents and pupils to seek their views. The outcomes are evident in the school's coherent improvement plan. Governors provide good support in holding the school to account. Where the school focuses its attention, improvements result, for example, in good achievement and standards in writing. High levels of care and the good curriculum have been achieved by harnessing the energies and abilities of staff. The contribution to leadership made by subject leaders is satisfactory. However, there have been limited opportunities for them to visit other classes to check whether intended improvements are taking root. This is partly why there are still inconsistencies in teaching and achievement.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Waterloo Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL7 9NA

I would like to explain what the inspectors found out and to thank you for answering our questions politely and helpfully.

We agree with your headteacher that your school is at least satisfactory and good in some aspects. The level of care and support that teachers and assistants provide is excellent. They make sure that you are safe, happy and ready to learn. We believe that this is why you behave well, try your best and help each other. Your school provides a good curriculum with lots of interesting lessons and extra things to do. We believe that this is why you enjoy school and want to come. We can see that your attendance is improving.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. It is good in English, particularly in writing where standards are now higher than average. In mathematics and science, most pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are average. Pupils have secure skills in ICT and make good progress in physical and health education. The youngest children get off to a good start in the nursery. Most do well in reading and mathematics in the Reception classes, although they do not have enough opportunities to learn for themselves.

The way your school is led and managed is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher do a good job in checking what happens in lessons and how well you are progressing. They are quick to find out where your progress slows down and provide extra support. This is helping many of you to make better progress.

To help your school to improve further we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that children in the Reception classes have more opportunities to choose their own activities and learn for themselves
- make sure that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
- make sure that teachers in charge of the different subjects visit other classes to check that improvements are happening.