

# Weston Point Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111002
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	310478
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Glenis Bellfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss N Curphey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Castner Avenue Weston Point Runcorn Cheshire WA7 4EQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	1928 574593
<b>Fax number</b>	1928 572405

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area which has more social disadvantage than the average. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds but are predominantly of White British heritage. There is a small proportion of Polish pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need than is the norm. This is because the school has a unit for up to seven pupils with educational and behavioural difficulties and at present there are six children attached to this unit; all have statements of special educational need. There are other pupils with statements fully integrated into mainstream classes. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. The school has been awarded National Healthy School status and an Activemark for its work in physical education.

## 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. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. Parents and pupils confirm its excellent work in promoting pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being and the high quality of care, guidance and support provided. The school is very successful in its aim to ensure that pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and have access to a rich curriculum. Instrumental in making this happen is a very effective headteacher, who is ably supported by the senior and middle management team. Typical comments from parents are, 'it really is a community school' and, 'it is a real home from home'.

Senior managers and governors are most effective in creating a safe, secure environment within which pupils thrive personally and academically. Pupils develop very positive relationships and leave school with high self-esteem. Because pupils know that they are all valued equally, they grow in self-confidence, increasingly become independent and strive hard to succeed. Very effective systems to promote better achievement, introduced over the last two years, have resulted in pupils' achievements moving from satisfactory to good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Standards have risen over the same period. Rigorous assessment, combined with successful strategies to eliminate underachievement and to target individuals and groups of pupils, have resulted in impressive improvements in the number of pupils reaching expected standards in the national tests. This has led to standards rising to above average by the end of Year 6 in 2007. Despite indicated improvements in the 2007 tests, the school rightly identifies raising the achievements of the more able pupils as an important and necessary next step to ensure they achieve as well as they can.

Pupils' enjoyment of school derives from good teaching and an imaginative curriculum. The much increased use of information and communication technology (ICT), of specialist teaching and of linking learning to real life situations has enthused pupils to engage fully in their learning. Where teaching is not as strong, the challenge for more able pupils is not consistently sufficient to ensure they make as much progress as they should. This is in contrast to the very good teaching and support provided for pupils who find more difficulty in learning or behaving well. Pupils are knowledgeable about their progress and what they need to do to improve their work. As a result of the extremely popular podcast, pupils have a real purpose for writing. By this process, pupils can record on the school website interviews with visitors in school and on visits, productions they take part in and lessons they particularly enjoy. This initiative is attracting interest locally and nationally. Writing was a relative weakness in pupils' achievements in the past but they now happily prepare reports and write play scripts to be broadcast. The initiative has also enhanced their speaking skills.

Pupils in the unit are well managed and make good progress. Their needs and achievements are carefully monitored and wherever possible they join mainstream classes to be taught alongside pupils of their own age. This also improves their confidence and self-esteem.

The school knows itself well, is proud of its achievements but equally realistic about those areas where improvement still needs to take place. It has improved well since the last inspection and, given its recent record of higher achievement and standards, demonstrates both good capacity to improve and good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Reception with skills ranging from well below to below those expected for their age. They have lots of opportunities to meet with staff before entering the Reception class and so settle in very quickly. This is because they are both cared for well and given responsibility in equal measure resulting in them rapidly settling into routines, sharing and cooperating well and enjoying returning their resources to their correct storage area. Their language development is consistently and effectively promoted by the adults teaching them. As a result of the good teaching and care they receive, they make good progress overall. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made good progress, but their overall standards are still below average for their age. They achieve best in their personal and emotional development, in their speaking skills, in their ability to recognise shapes and in their physical development and creativity. Their ability to link letters and sounds, to calculate number, and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them are not as strong.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that throughout the school, more able pupils are consistently challenged in all lessons so that they achieve their potential.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Most pupils achieve well. This represents a considerable improvement over the last two years and is due to more rigorous assessment and better targeted support for individual pupils at risk of underachieving.

In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) standards are broadly average. In Year 2, standards in writing have traditionally been a weakness but the 2007 teacher assessments indicate a dramatic improvement.

Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved well over the last two years. The pupils' desire to do well in the Year 6 tests is demonstrated by their voluntary attendance on Saturday mornings at extra classes put on by dedicated staff to boost their standards and confidence. From being significantly below average up to two years ago, standards in Year 6 have risen to average in 2006 and above average in 2007. This represents good achievement. The school is now rightly focusing its attention on ensuring that pupils of above average ability achieve consistently well.

Because they are so well supported by the school and the local authority, the few pupils with English as an additional language achieve well as do those who find learning or behaving more difficult than others. This applies to pupils in the unit as well as those supported in classrooms.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils seize every opportunity to experience new things, to join in activities and to demonstrate their skills. They talk enthusiastically about their many contributions to the school community. Pupils feel an important part of the school family, willingly taking responsibility for many aspects of the smooth day to day running of the school. They look after each other, act as school councillors and follow a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school work

and thoroughly enjoy all out-of-class clubs, residential visits and welcome a range of visitors into the school. There is a real buzz about creating their own podcasts which has enhanced many areas of their learning, the school's very good partnership with parents and the local community.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop into concerned citizens who clearly know right from wrong and have a keen sense of fair play. They respect their environment and, because of very good curricular provision, have improved their knowledge of the values, beliefs and lifestyles of other cultures. Through fund-raising and school council membership, pupils learn the basics of economic life and democratic principles. Pupils have responded well to the school's efforts to improve attendance which is now broadly average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

For most pupils, the consistently good teaching is improving their achievements and standards. Teachers make good use of ICT to make learning interesting and to clarify more difficult ideas. Because teachers share with pupils the assessments of how well they are progressing, the standards that they attain and the areas of their work they need to improve, pupils feel fully involved in their own learning. Subsequently, they are keen to meet the targets set for them. Many teachers use humour well to create a positive atmosphere in lessons. Careful planning provides pupils with many opportunities to link learning across subjects. This particularly enhances the quality of pupils' writing and ICT skills.

The use of specialist teaching in French, music, art and drama contributes well to pupils' good achievements. The teaching and support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties and for those who speak English as an additional language are good. They not only promote their good achievement, but enhance their self-esteem. In some lessons, the level of challenge provided for the more able pupils is not rigorous enough and this results in them not achieving as well as they could in national tests.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding and fully meets all requirements. The rich experiences on offer to pupils are a significant factor in their much improved achievements and the rise in standards over the last two years. Changes to the content and organisation of the curriculum have resulted in: improvements in the quality of pupils' writing; in their expertise in the use of ICT to support their learning; and in their enthusiasm for, and achievements in, all subjects. Pupils have a rich diet of visits, including residential experiences for all in Key Stages 1 and 2, visitors and out-of-class clubs. All of these contribute very well to their enthusiasm for learning. In Years 3 to 6, pupils thoroughly enjoy learning to speak French. The excellent programme to promote their good health and personal and social development is a key factor in how well they behave, enjoy learning, look after themselves and others and their very positive attitudes. The curriculum offered to more vulnerable and/or less able pupils meets their needs very well and enhances their good achievement.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Parents are justified in highlighting this as one of the strongest aspects of the school's work. There are many tributes to the excellence of the sensitive and extremely effective support provided for vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils. Weston Point is homely and friendly. The teachers are full of enthusiasm and offer much support to the pupils. 'My child has thoroughly enjoyed her time in this school and has thrived to become an outgoing, caring and confident individual,' is typical of the many extremely positive comments made by parents. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are fully in place. There are frequent risk assessments and pupils' health and safety is paramount.

Systems to ensure pupils' good achievement are rigorous and used effectively to highlight any potential underachievement and to initiate extra support where needed. The school has successful strategies to try to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. Excellent partnerships with outside agencies enhance the provision for pupils most in need of support or to improve the provision for pupils with special gifts or talents.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very effective and active leadership. She has a clear vision for staff and pupils to follow in order to focus on those aspects of the school's work most in need of improvement. Her teaching, throughout the school of small groups, has promoted better achievement over the last two years. The deputy headteacher has contributed very effectively to the productive changes in the organisation of teaching and to enhance provision in music and ICT. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm for learning has increased well.

The performance of staff is rigorously evaluated and, where necessary, effective action taken to improve teaching quality and other aspects of provision. For example, improvements in the quality of pupils' writing have resulted directly from the actions of senior managers. The challenging targets set for improvements in national tests results were met or exceeded in 2007 because the school's leadership has shown a keen determination to use them as a driver for improvement. Subject coordinators are enthusiastic and now have more time to carry out their duties, which was an issue at the last inspection. However, they are not always focused enough on how their work is going to specifically improve pupils' learning.

Governors are committed and supportive. However, there is an acknowledgement that governors should be more rigorous in checking on aspects of the school's work. There are plans to ensure this takes place. The school has excellent partnerships with other schools and outside providers which contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment, their personal development and their good academic achievements.

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

### 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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Weston Point Primary School, Runcorn WA7 4EQ

I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. You and your parents were very keen to tell me how much they valued the school and all it does for you. I agree. It is a good school and has some features that are excellent.

It is clear that the school has been successful in helping you improve your work recently, especially your writing. You have played a big part in this by trying very hard and linking your writing to your podcasts and play scripts. I was most impressed with your enthusiasm for all aspects of school life. You have done well to earn the school awards for healthy lifestyles and physical education. You obviously enjoy the many clubs, residential and other visits out of school. I read lots of compliments about your behaviour and friendliness on these. One of the things that you were most excited about was the podcast. This really seems to have helped you to achieve better and for your parents to share in your learning much more.

You look after each other well and respect your teachers and the resources you use. Your behaviour is excellent. The children in the unit do well and it is nice that they join in with you for so many lessons. You have very caring teachers who help most of you to make good progress. You are extremely well looked after by all the adults in the school and you are very lucky to have such delicious school lunches. Miss Curphey and her staff manage the school well and have good ideas about how the school can improve even more.

I have asked that they work even harder to make sure that those of you who find your learning easier than most are always set work that helps you make good progress.