

# West Cornforth Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114079
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311474
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ernie Hurrell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Sarsfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	High Street West Cornforth Ferryhill County Durham DL17 9HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01740 654315
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

West Cornforth is an average size primary school which serves a former mining village community in south Durham. The locality displays very high levels of social and economic deprivation. A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average, although a below average number have a statement for special educational need. Most pupils are of White British heritage and some are from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller families. None learns English as an additional language.

A well above average number of pupils joins the school at times other than the usual start in Reception.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

West Cornforth is a good school in which pupils achieve well. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, especially pupils' personal development and well-being, their care, guidance and support, and the curriculum. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, ably assisted by her senior team, and the strong commitment by all the staff to a clear philosophy that every child does matter, are at the heart of the school's success. Together they promote an outstanding caring and learning ethos for all. The school forges very effective partnerships with the local community and parents, and makes a substantial contribution to village life. Parents are very appreciative of its work. These comments sum up their views: 'Standards of behaviour are very high', '...there is a variety of activities and topics to stimulate children', '...the school has strong leadership and teachers appear committed to achieving the highest possible standards for children of all abilities'.

Many pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are very low compared with those typical for their age. Given their starting points, most pupils make good progress and achieve well. In 2007, the results of the teacher assessments in Year 2 were below average but based on the school's own data, pupils in the current Year 2 have made a noticeable improvement. Standards in Year 6 were below average in 2007, especially in English and science. Writing was a weakness in both Years 2 and 6. However, the school has acted promptly and a new initiative to raise standards is clearly paying dividends. The school's own assessment data for the current Year 6 pupils shows they are reaching higher standards in all subjects, including writing. Most pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards. Pupils from travellers' families, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and more able and talented pupils all make good progress.

Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is outstanding and their spiritual development is good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and in assemblies, where they contribute very enthusiastically and happily share the success of others. They act safely and sensibly indoors and outdoors. Pupils are keen to talk about how thoroughly they enjoy school. They value highly the importance of healthy eating and physical activities, reflected by the Healthy School and Activemark awards. The school and local community benefit enormously from pupils' contributions. The school very successfully develops pupils' confidence and social skills and, with competent basic skills, prepares them very well for their futures.

The headteacher and senior leadership team successfully promote achievement and personal development through good teaching, outstanding care, guidance and support, and a very rich and varied range of activities which benefits pupils enormously. The school collects information about pupils' performance and uses it well to identify those who need additional support. Targets are challenging at whole school level. Learning targets set by class teachers for individual pupils are not always precise enough to help pupils to know what they are aiming to accomplish.

The school gives good value for money. Staff and governors diligently review the quality of the school's work and accurately identify areas for development. The school's clear track record of progress in recent years indicates a good capacity for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the nursery with skills which are very low compared with those typical for their age, especially in communication and language. They settle very quickly and enjoy school. They make good progress because of the way teachers and teaching assistants effectively manage the provision to make good use of the extensive indoor and outdoor facilities, and foster children's development in all areas of learning. Children follow classroom routines well, and thoroughly enjoy taking a full part in activities. They work equally well independently or when in groups. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development. Although a large minority reach all the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, overall attainment is generally below what would be expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and to a lesser extent in mathematical development.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Achieve consistency and precision in setting learning targets for individual pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From the time they enter school, pupils achieve well and most pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. In the 2008 statutory assessments, results in reading, writing and mathematics are close to national expectations. Pupils' progress throughout Key Stage 2 is good. After year-on-year improvement, 2007 results dipped to below average, especially in English and science. As a result of the school's efforts to raise standards, recent data show that higher proportions of pupils are reaching expected levels in English, mathematics and science. More able and talented pupils are set to reach high standards. The school rightly identified writing as a key priority for attention and, this year, standards have improved markedly, although pupils' progress in reading, mathematics and science remains higher. The school recognises the importance of sustaining its initiative to improve writing and consolidate its success.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Many pupils have poorly developed personal and social skills and low self-esteem when they enter school, but they are confident, self-reliant and optimistic by the time they leave. School is an enjoyable place to be and pupils feel safe and very well cared for. They say that everyone gets on very well together and that rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school diligently rewards good attendance, and is rigorous in monitoring absence and taking prompt action. Despite this, attendance rates stubbornly remain below average. Behaviour is excellent. There are a small minority of pupils who find school routines and disciplines hard to cope with because of emotional and social difficulties. The way in which they are managed and supported is outstanding and their personal development is excellent. The gains pupils make in their social, moral and cultural understanding are excellent and their spiritual awareness is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and enjoy the many sporting activities offered. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities, contributing to routine management tasks and helping to look after the younger children, for

example, as playground buddies. Their involvement with the local community is excellent, particularly in charitable activities and contributing to village social life. The school council is very effective in representing pupils' views. It's also successful in getting more sports equipment and influencing improvements to the outside play areas and grounds. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good and leads to good progress. Pupils respond well to opportunities to learn and work collaboratively and independently. Questioning is used exceptionally well to encourage the least confident pupils to give their views and participate in lessons, leading to improved speaking and listening skills. Teaching ensures that information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to support pupils' learning. For example, a Year 6 pupil gave an impressive powerpoint presentation on rainfall, using graphics and charts to illustrate climate changes. The exceptional standards of presentation seen in pupils' work books testify to the pride pupils take in their work and reflect teachers' high expectations. Pupils receive good feedback in lessons and through teachers' marking of their work on how they can improve. However, the learning targets set for individual pupils sometimes lack sufficient detail to give pupils a clear understanding of what teachers expect them to accomplish. In some of the lessons seen, the sequence of learning activities failed to build sufficiently on what had gone on before.

Teaching assistants and helpers make a significant contribution to supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the many pupils who join the school part way through a year. They also ensure that those who are quick to learn are challenged by giving them more complex tasks. For example, some pupils working on the history of the village's mining community showed real understanding of the social and economic conditions of the past.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The excellent curriculum balances very well planned provision for improving pupils' basic skills with schemes of work to enable them to widen their experience and understanding of the world around them. Every opportunity is taken, for example, to get pupils talking about their work to consolidate learning and develop self-confidence. Excellent provision is made for their emotional and social development through a well-thought-out personal education programme. The human relationships and health education programme is fundamental to pupils' growing moral and spiritual awareness. Outstanding provision is made to broaden pupils' awareness of the rich and diverse cultural and religious aspects of the society they live in. There is a wide range of well attended extra-curricular activities which does much to extend pupils' understanding and add to the enjoyment of the work done in class. The many trips away, including residential visits, develop pupils' self-reliance and open up horizons. A great many visitors come to the school to speak about their experiences here and abroad. Pupils talk informatively about what they have learned from visitors about life in Africa and about children in Burma. The displays around the school are testimony to the wealth of curriculum provision.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The atmosphere in the school is one of welcome and care, clearly coupled to a strong sense of purpose. It stems from the outstanding way staff are concerned for the welfare of their pupils. In many ways, this exemplary pastoral care leads to the excellent personal development and well-being of all pupils and their good achievement. Excellent arrangements for pupils' emotional and social development work outstandingly well, for example, fully justifying the 'Anti-bullying Award'. Extensive links with outside support agencies and closely forged partnerships with parents are highly successful. Very good procedures ensure children settle quickly into school and that they are well prepared for a smooth transition to nearby secondary schools. The school diligently and rigorously collects information about pupils' attainments each term to track their overall progress. Staff carefully identify anyone at risk of falling behind. In turn, pupils needing additional help, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive very effective support from teachers and teaching assistants which helps them make good progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership in committing the school to equality of opportunity for every pupil and providing strong direction to the work of everyone in it. She is well supported by able senior colleagues and all the staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic priorities for improvement have been identified to help raise standards further. Systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress, helping to identify and ensure support for those likely to fall behind. The targets set for the whole school are challenging but the learning targets set for individual pupils are not always precise enough. Child protection procedures are in place and meet government requirements. Risk assessments are undertaken, particularly for trips out of school, and health and safety checks are carried out on a regular basis. Efficient use is made of a range of good quality resources. Governors play an effective role in ensuring the school is well managed and administered. There have been improvements since the last inspection, particularly in self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress and the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

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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	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	2
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	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

25 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Cornforth Primary School, Durham, DL17 9HP

We really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school this week. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms to see you at work. We did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. You were very well behaved, very polite and really helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy coming to school, how you take part so enthusiastically in all the different activities, and how you value the friendships you make. We were impressed with the many ways you contribute to school life, such as through your school council and as playground buddies, as well as how much you contribute to life in West Cornforth. Your headteacher and all the staff are rightly very proud of you.

Yours is a good school in many ways, and it is outstanding in the care and support, personal development and well-being and the curriculum it provides. It is very warm and welcoming and very well organised. All the adults in the school look after you exceptionally well. We know that you feel safe. Most of your lessons are good. You work really hard and like to take part in lessons and other school activities. Last year, those of you in the Nursery and Reception class made good progress in your work, although not as much as hoped for in developing speaking, reading and writing skills. Most of you are making good progress and we are pleased to see the standard of your work is getting better. We were pleased to see that pupils who get extra help do well. We were very impressed with the quality of your written work, especially with the care you obviously take to make it neat and tidy. Your teachers help you to know how well you are doing, but we've asked them to help you further, in the same way in all your classes. We've asked them to be more precise when they let you know what they expect each of you to accomplish.

You have very many opportunities at West Cornforth to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. Many of you will soon be moving on to secondary schools. We hope that you all do really well.

Yours faithfully,

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector