

# Walverden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119178
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313209
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Bardon

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	419
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Berry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Margaret Thacker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Bracewell Street Nelson Lancashire BB9 0TL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 614834
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 616709

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves a disadvantaged area close to the town centre. Approximately 70% of pupils are from minority ethnic families, predominantly of Pakistani ethnicity. A quarter of all pupils are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number with a statement of special educational need is well above average. A relatively high number of pupils leave or join the school part way through their primary education. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is very low and their communication skills are often weak. The school provides several extended services including family and adult learning.

## 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 where pupils achieve well. The school's success is due in no small measure to the skilful and effective leadership of the headteacher. Aply supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, she gives the school a strong sense of purpose, enabling it to develop at a good pace. The school works in challenging circumstances but there is a determination to succeed which is shared by those who work and learn there.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and gives children a good start to school. Good teaching and colourful activities help children to make good progress, but they have a very low starting point and, by the end of Reception, many are still well below average for their age. In Key Stages 1 and 2, lively, well planned lessons combined with pupils' positive attitudes result in all pupils making good progress. Standards improve well but are well below average at Year 2. By the end of Year 6, standards have improved substantially and are average in mathematics but below average overall. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. By the end of Year 6 they speak, read and write competently in English but relatively few exceed the expectations for their age.

Pupils' personal development is good. They grow into pleasant and sociable young people. Most pupils attend regularly and there has been a marked improvement in attendance since the last inspection. This is one of many indicators of just how much they enjoy school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe and secure in the school. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate well but are not inclined to contribute to lessons unless asked directly to do so. Racial harmony is excellent and pupils get on well. They show a clear understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy diet and contribute willingly to the school and wider communities. Pupils develop a satisfactory range of basic skills in preparation for their future education and life.

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships are very positive and classrooms have a pleasant and productive atmosphere. Lessons are planned carefully so that pupils' learning builds securely on what has gone before. Teachers start lessons by sharing objectives with the pupils, but these are often not clear enough and pupils are not sure how to use them to assess their own learning. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' learning well with the result that pupils of differing abilities, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language all maintain a good rate of progress. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of stimulating opportunities to learn. The school pays close attention to pupils' welfare and provides them with good quality care, guidance and support. Their academic and personal guidance are both effective.

Since the last inspection, better procedures for checking the school's performance have ensured that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. Senior staff have a clear picture of what is going well and what needs to improve and plan accordingly. Governors play a full and active part in the life of the school although they have difficulty persuading parents to join the governing body. Finances are managed efficiently and the school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils who attain at an above average level in English.
- Ensure that in all lessons pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and can use this information to measure their own progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good. Across the school, there are a lot of movements in and out of the school which can affect the performance of pupils. Pupils who stay at the school throughout their primary education usually make the best progress and by Year 6, often attain standards close to the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, English with an additional language and the able, gifted and talented make good progress.

From a very low starting point in Nursery, standards rise progressively to below average by the end of Year 6. Although they make good progress in the Foundation Stage, many children are still well short of the expectations for their age by the end of Reception, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. From this low starting point, pupils in Key Stage 1 progress well. Despite this, they do not manage to do enough to catch up and the results of assessments show that standards at Year 2 are well below average. The progress continues at a good rate in Key Stage 2. In 2006 results in the national tests were average in mathematics but below in English and science. While almost a third of pupils exceeded expectations in mathematics, only one in eight did so in English. Overall, this was a good performance and the school exceeded all the targets it had set.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their attitudes to work are very positive and most are motivated to learn. While pupils are very attentive in class they are rather passive and not inclined to contribute until prompted by the teacher. Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures get on extremely well and happy faces bear testament to the pleasure they get from school. They are friendly and polite and behave well both in and out of lessons. Pupils feel safe and secure. When asked what they liked most about school there was common agreement, 'Teachers are kind and helpful.' The school's achievement of gaining a Healthy Eating award is reflected in the pupils' good understanding of using a sensible diet as well as taking regular exercise. Pupils develop a clear sense of responsibility towards others in the school and those less fortunate than themselves. They value the opportunities they are given to contribute to the school and develop strong social and moral values. Children's personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is good and helps them acquire the social skills many lack on entry to the school. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' preparation for future learning and life is satisfactory but a lack of literacy skills puts some at a disadvantage.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and set interesting tasks. Pupils try hard and make every effort to meet the learning objectives teachers set at the start of each lesson. The quality of these objectives varies. In some lessons they provide sharp targets but in others they lack clarity and leave pupils wondering exactly what they have to achieve. Pupils have yet to acquire a full understanding of how to use these

objectives to measure their own progress. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. The information this provides is used effectively to plan work which builds on what they have learned previously. As a result, all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language gain knowledge, understanding and skills at a good pace. While pupils concentrate well in class, and will readily answer questions, they often lack spontaneity. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Teaching assistants work cohesively alongside class teachers and play a productive part in moving pupils' learning forward. Opportunities to engage pupils in conversation are taken well by all staff and this has a positive effect on the pupils' language development.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils are stimulated to learn by the many and varied experiences the school provides. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a thoughtfully planned programme of activities covering all the areas of learning and focusing on the main areas of need: language and knowledge of the world. A colourful new approach to writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been adopted enthusiastically and is starting to raise standards. The school has made a successful start in linking subjects to provide cohesion in the curriculum and to ensure opportunities for learning are maximised. The use of information and communication technology in lessons has improved substantially since the last inspection and enhances pupils' learning in many subjects. Frequent visits and visitors broaden pupils' horizons and help to deepen their understanding. Pupils benefit from a good range of clubs and additional activities which do much for their enjoyment of school. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language is structured carefully and supports their learning well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good. Pupils are kept safe and secure and all the required procedures are in place. Staff know the pupils well and respond effectively in meeting their individual needs. Pupils are confident that if they have a problem or a concern there is always someone to turn to for help or advice. Close attention is paid to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, enabling them to learn effectively and to play a full part in the life of the school. Procedures for tracking pupils' academic development provide a clear and accurate overview of the progress they make over time and enable informed decisions to be made to support their learning. The space between assessments is currently a little too wide. The school is about to implement procedures that shorten the times between evaluations and enhance intervention.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The experienced headteacher provides a clear educational direction which is shared by a strong deputy headteacher and supported by an effective senior management team. There is a very positive ethos; everyone is valued and great care is taken to ensure that all pupils are included fully. This makes for a harmonious school which runs smoothly.

Senior managers monitor the quality and impact of teaching and learning thoroughly and use the information to improve practice and raise standards. The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected. Thorough and effective procedures for checking and evaluating the school's performance are in place, enabling the key priorities for development to be identified clearly and planned thoroughly. This, along with a well conceived new management structure, draws all members of staff into decision making, and gives the school a good scope for improving in future. Subject leadership has also improved but some curriculum leaders have still to hone their management skills because their contribution to school self evaluation varies in quality.

Governors are supportive of the school and statutory requirements are met. They support and challenge the school effectively. Financial management is good and the school's plans for further improvement to the building are well resourced.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

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

<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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walverden Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 0TL

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. Although I was only with you for a day, I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about all the interesting things you do, and special thanks to those who talked with me about the school. Walverden is a good school and I can understand why you enjoy it so much.

There were many things I liked about the school. I was very impressed with the good progress you make and how much you learn. When I visited lessons it was nice to see everyone working hard and listening carefully to the teachers. I think you could learn even more if, instead of always waiting for the teacher to ask questions, you tried to think of and put forward ideas of your own. I am pleased that you find your teachers kind and helpful and feel you can go to any member of staff if anything is bothering you. You are clearly growing up into sensible and responsible young people with a good understanding of what is important, such as leading a healthy lifestyle. I was especially pleased to hear just how well you all get along.

I identified two things that I feel would help to make your school even better. This is what I suggested to the school:

- Help more of you to reach above average standards in English. You can help in this by seeking ways to improve your reading and writing.
- Make sure that at the start of lessons you are clearer about what you are expected to learn so that you understand how well you are doing. You can help in this by regularly checking on how well you are doing.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable day and I wish you lots of luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon

Lead inspector