

Waterloo Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119255
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	313233
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan

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	679
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edward Collett
Headteacher	Mr Mark Gray
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Waterloo Road Blackpool Lancashire FY4 3AG
Telephone number	01253 315370
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Waterloo Primary School is much larger than most primary schools and is situated south of the centre of Blackpool. Most pupils are White British. The number of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is well above average. The school includes a special education resource facility for pupils with hearing impairments. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school holds the Investors in People Award, the Healthy School Award and the Basic Skills Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Waterloo Primary School is a good school. Most parents are very happy with the education their children receive. They say that the school is keen to work with them and they appreciate the efforts it makes to include all learners. Several parents' comments were reflected by one who said, 'Waterloo is a brilliant school and the teachers are excellent'.

Most pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the way that adults listen to their views and take them seriously. Pupils feel a real sense of pride in their school. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and any issues that arise are quickly resolved. Pupils say that there are very few problems with bullying and these are dealt with very quickly.

Leadership is good. Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and the areas that it needs to develop. They are ambitious for the school and committed to the best for every child. Middle leaders use information about individual pupils effectively to monitor teaching, plan school improvement and provide support for individuals when needed.

Pupils are well supported in school. The high staff to pupil ratio and a commitment to enabling every child to succeed are central to ensuring most pupils make good progress both personally and academically. The way the school supports vulnerable groups of pupils is very good. Senior members of staff have responsibilities for these groups of young people and much time is spent working with other agencies to make sure young people continue to thrive despite facing difficulties.

Pupils make good progress overall. When pupils leave the school, they have reached standards that are broadly average in mathematics and science and just below average in English. These are achieved from particularly low starting points for a significant number of pupils. Standards are lower in English because pupils' progress is no better than satisfactory in writing. It is improving because of good teaching and improved use of assessment in English lessons. However, there is insufficient opportunity to develop writing skills in subjects other than English.

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Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. New methods for using assessment have recently been introduced to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Teachers have concentrated first on strengthening guidance for pupils in writing and this is beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' progress in this subject. The same impact is not yet seen in reading and mathematics.

The good curriculum means that most pupils enjoy their education. A strong focus on basic skills is supported by a rich and varied set of experiences and extra-curricular activities. Links with the local secondary school support a wide range of physical education and out of school sports opportunities. Pupils regularly enjoy visits, visitors and special themed activities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery with skills that are significantly below what is typical for their age, particularly in language and personal development. Children settle into the Nursery well. They are happy and quickly get used to classroom routines. Teaching in the Nursery is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress. Activities are chosen well. They appropriately meet the children's interests and needs. Activities led by adults are satisfactory but do not provide

challenge for all children. Questioning by staff is often limited and does not give children the opportunity to develop their spoken language sufficiently.

Provision in the Reception year is outstanding. Children are fully engaged in the outstanding range of activities and make very good progress because of the outstanding teaching. Skilled staff build on what the children already know through challenging questions and highly relevant activities. Good use of the local area is made to widen children's experiences. For example, the recent topic on food included a visit to the local greengrocers which prompted some very effective learning and role play.

There are many children in the Foundation Stage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are identified early and good support is given quickly. However, only about half of all children typically reach the levels expected for their age group by the time they are five.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in English, especially the quality of writing across the curriculum.
- Improve children's progress in the Nursery class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well overall. Pupils who need extra support in learning get extra help quickly and most make good progress because of this.

Children start school with skills and experiences that are well below what is expected for their age, especially in relation to early language. They make good progress while in the Foundation Stage. However, pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are below expectations for their age.

Pupils continue to make good progress so that, by the time they are 11, the standards they achieve are broadly average in science and mathematics and just below average in English. The school's own self-evaluation identifies the progress pupils make in writing as satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence and the school's own data confirm this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe knowing they can trust adults within the school. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that bullying is dealt with quickly and, as a result understand that this is unacceptable. Behaviour is good. Pupils form good relationships with each other and with adults in the school.

Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and respect cultures other than their own. They form views and opinions with empathy for others. In one lesson, pupils made decisions about local developments, and maturely took into account the needs and preferences of different groups of people in their community.

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Attendance is satisfactory. Rates of absence are in line with the average when compared with other schools in similar circumstances. The school works hard with the families of pupils with poor attendance and, because of this, attendance has improved in the last twelve months.

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Pupils' attitudes to healthy lifestyles are generally good. Pupils take part in the wide range of physical activities on offer at lunch times and in after school clubs. They understand the importance of active lifestyles and healthy eating. Pupils make healthy choices when eating school dinners and understand important messages such as eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Younger pupils take advantage of healthy snacks provided by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Most lessons are interesting and pupils quickly acquire new skills and knowledge. Teachers are energetic, enthusiastic and motivate pupils to want to learn. Strong classroom management fosters good attitudes to learning. Activities are mostly matched accurately to the differing needs within the class and classroom assistants provide effective support. As a result, pupils with learning and/or physical difficulties and those who are particularly gifted or talented make equally good progress. On the occasions when teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is insufficient emphasis on involving pupils in the lesson.

- Assessment information is increasingly used well to set challenging targets for pupils and match work to their learning needs. The best examples of good marking provide helpful comments about how well pupils are doing and further guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Academic and personal development is promoted well by the good curriculum. The curriculum is well balanced and pupils enjoy the range of activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the special education resource facility (SERF), are effectively provided for through a range of activities specially tailored to help them succeed. Gifted and talented pupils have a good range of additional provision.

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Pupils are well prepared for their future education. There is a strong focus on basic skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop good quality writing across the full range of subjects. Enrichment activities are particularly strong. These include a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports that foster healthy and active lifestyles. The broad range of visitors and visits encourage pupils' independence and bring learning to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pastoral care is outstanding because highly effective systems are in place to nurture and support all pupils and especially the most vulnerable. Many staff have specific responsibilities to support particular group of pupils, such as those who are at risk of exclusion, or those who are new to the school who need help to settle down. Staff work closely with the families of the most vulnerable pupils and in partnership with external agencies. This makes a positive difference to their lives. Because the systems of support are so effective, all pupils in the school can enjoy their learning and make good progress.

All procedures related to pupils' health, safety and well-being meet government requirements. School leaders make sure that staff are well trained in child protection and first aid procedures. Midday supervisors know the pupils well. Many work in classrooms during lesson times and so understand how to meet the needs of individuals. Lunch times, as a result, are safe and well supervised in spite of the limited outdoor space.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as new systems for setting targets in reading and mathematics are introduced. Target setting for writing is more established. Most pupils are familiar with their targets, know what they need to do to improve and are involved in reviewing them. Whilst there are inconsistencies, the marking of writing is often good. It helps pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has a large leadership team. These leaders work well together and are ambitious for the school. Collectively, they have demonstrated an accurate view of the school's current position and a good capacity to improve the school further.

Senior leaders provide clear vision and direction to raise standards. Year leaders and subject leaders share this vision and ensure that school improvement is effective within their areas of responsibility. Teachers understand the priorities identified for improving the school and share a commitment to raising standards. However, documents and audits to plan and evaluate school improvement sometimes lack focus. When this is the case, there is too much emphasis on what is being done rather than measuring the difference their efforts are making to pupils' progress.

Targets for pupils' attainment are challenging and reviewed regularly. Teachers and year leaders plan together and track pupils' progress so that, when necessary, extra help or support is arranged. This is a strength of the school's provision.

Resources are allocated well. Staffing ratios are good and support staff are well placed to support teachers in raising standards.

Governors are committed and active in supporting the school. Key members regularly visit the school to support teachers, discuss school improvement and hold senior leaders to account.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
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	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?	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	2

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	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

9 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterloo Primary School, Blackpool, FY4 3AG

As you know, I visited your school, along with John Heap, Sheila Mawer and Michael Onyon, to carry out an inspection. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and talking with us about your school so freely. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

Many of you were keen to tell us about how good your school is and we agree with you. Your school is a good school and you are right to be proud.

I know that many of you are particularly pleased with the outdoor equipment and games that you have. I can see why. You have quite a small playground but your school has made sure that it is packed with interesting activities and people who organise games for you. This would not work if you did not behave as well as you do, so well done.

We found that you feel safe in school and that teachers and other staff work hard to make sure that you have everything you need to succeed. I was particularly pleased to see some of you getting extra support for things that you may otherwise find tricky. Because of this, you were doing well.

We found that you are taught well and that your teachers have been helping you make your writing better. Writing is a really important skill that you are likely to need throughout your life. We have asked your teachers to find more opportunities in literacy lessons and in other subjects to focus on what makes good writing so that you can all do the best that you possibly can.

We have asked your school to make sure that the youngest children at Waterloo School get the very best start that they can.

I wish you all the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Lead inspector