

# Western Springs Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124125
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	319924
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shirley Wellings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	School Road Rugeley WS15 2PD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 256000
<b>Fax number</b>	01889 256008

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

When the school was inspected in November 2006, it was judged to require special measures. It was asked to: ensure teachers set suitably challenging tasks for pupils and increase the progress made in lessons; ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are implemented rigorously; carry out rigorous monitoring of the school's performance to identify exactly where weaknesses lie; draw up and implement plans to rectify the weaknesses; and, improve the effectiveness of the governing body. HMI and Additional Inspectors visited the school in March, June and November 2007 to assess the school's progress. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making good progress in tackling the weaknesses listed above.

The school serves a relatively disadvantaged area on the outskirts of Rugeley. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few who do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion who are eligible for free school meals. The headteacher had been appointed as temporary headteacher just before the previous inspection. She was subsequently appointed as permanent headteacher. The deputy headteacher left to take up a headship in September 2007, since then the school have been supported by a seconded deputy headteacher, which the local authority helped facilitate.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Western Springs School has improved markedly over the last five terms and is now satisfactory with good features. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The good leadership of the school has worked well, in conjunction with the local authority, to bring about sustained improvements. The highly motivating and empowering headteacher, supported very well by the deputy headteacher, has worked successfully to bring about an atmosphere of accountability and self respect so that staff all want the best for their pupils. Middle leaders, who were poor previously, are considerably better and are able to identify what needs to be done and set about bringing improvements. They feel empowered.

Standards are improving, although they remain exceptionally low. Pupils in Key Stage 2 and Reception generally make good progress in lessons. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory because pupils are not challenged as much and they are not as enthused in class. Achievement is satisfactory in the school because better learning is making up for pupils' poor progress in the past. The strong focus on standards in English and mathematics means they have improved. Science standards are lower when compared to national figures and work in information and communication technology (ICT) does not always give pupils the range of skills they need to use ICT appropriately in other subjects.

Pupils are engaged in most lessons and say that the revised curriculum has helped concentration and done much to extend their enjoyment of learning. As one pupil said, 'The new curriculum is great because it is really interesting and helps me learn.' Teaching has improved greatly since the previous inspection and is satisfactory with many good elements. Most lessons are good and challenge pupils. Teachers mostly plan stimulating lessons and use assessments well to target future teaching and to adapt lessons. In some lessons, tasks are not always adapted to match the work to pupils of different abilities and they are not always as challenging and engaging as the best.

Pupils know how to stay safe and are very aware of how to remain healthy. Their good behaviour has been praised when making outside visits and is evident in classes and around the school. Pupils take pride in their school and they respond well to the effective care and support they receive. They make a good contribution to the local neighbourhood. Pupils have a good understanding of multicultural issues, and the school has gained recognition as an international school. Pupils' personal development is good, reflecting the high quality pastoral care. Academic guidance is satisfactory and is rightly identified by the school as an area for further improvement.

The school has secure procedures for safeguarding pupils. It has an accurate self-evaluation, which includes views from parents and governors. Governance is good and governors hold the school effectively to account. The school has good capacity to improve further and is realistic about the work needed to become even better. The local authority is committed to supporting the school whilst allowing leadership at all levels greater autonomy.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The children enter school with skills that are below those expected for their age. Standards in reading, writing and number calculations are well below expected levels, but the teaching of phonics makes a positive impact on early language skills. Good progress occurs in all areas of

learning and many children leave the Foundation Stage with average standards. Within a secure environment, children are encouraged to become independent, and particular emphasis is placed on the skills of speaking and listening. Good learning opportunities, through a wide range of interesting activities, ensure they make good progress. There are strong links with the adjacent pre-school, and the well planned introduction to school life ensures children settle quickly into familiar routines. The area outside the nursery has been much improved. The area outside the Reception class has the benefit of soft flooring, but there is little protection for children during inclement weather.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the pace of learning in Key Stage 1 by ensuring the quality of lessons are as good as other years and pupils are more challenged and engaged in their work.
- Raise achievement in science by monitoring the progress of pupils as comprehensively as in mathematics and English.
- Raise standards in ICT by developing appropriate skills that can be used effectively in other subjects.

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**

Children's skills when children start school are below those expected for their age. In Key Stage 1, standards remain below average, but the 2007 assessments show that pupils achieved higher than in previous years. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have all increased significantly on the previous year's performance. Results in reading and mathematics are the best the school has had and show the strong shoots of improvement. Progress in lessons is satisfactory.

Results in the Key Stage 2 tests in 2007 showed a marked improvement in English, but those in mathematics and science remained much the same as the previous year and exceptionally low. The achievement for these pupils remained unsatisfactory mainly because improvements in the quality of teaching and the increased progress of pupils in lessons were too late to overcome the very poor progress these pupils had made in previous years. School records show that pupils now make satisfactory progress, with some year groups making good progress. Overall, progress is satisfactory and improving, reflecting the far greater challenge in lessons. However, standards remain well below average in Year 6, because these pupils had significantly lower results than the previous cohort when they took their Year 2 assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they feel safe within school and that there are very few instances of bullying or other forms of intimidation. The majority of pupils say they really enjoy school and this is confirmed by parents. Attendance has improved and is average. This reflects the very effective work of the school to reduce absence. The breakfast club has helped to improve punctuality, although some pupils find it difficult to arrive on time for school.

Behaviour around the school and within lessons is good, indicating pupils' good moral development and well developed social skills. The revised curriculum has enhanced pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which is very good. Display is used well to enhance cultural awareness, for example Gambian artwork, the Chinese New Year and French day.

Pupils are very aware of the need to keep fit and remain healthy. As one young pupil said, 'Doing sport and exercise makes your heart beat and the blood flows quicker.' They also have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They support each other well and conscientiously act as playground 'buddies', including older pupils looking after younger ones. Pupils have influenced the buying of equipment for the new adventure trail, considering health and safety issues. They also take great pride in the new tyre play area, including writing instructions for its use. Pupils are very proud of their school, are well mannered, and make visitors very welcome. They also make a good contribution to the local community by acting as the 'green gang' or singing at the local church, and take great satisfaction in their gardening activities, which are well led by a parent governor. These have helped improve the grounds of the school which now look very smart and appealing. Their preparation for the future is enhanced by good collaboration skills, but weak literacy and numeracy skills mean it is satisfactory overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning has improved, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, and is satisfactory with many good elements. Pupils generally make good progress because lessons are engaging and challenging. Planning has improved through good coaching and ensures that work is better matched to the pupils' abilities. When teaching is not as good, work is not matched to pupils' needs, the pace of lessons is slower, pupils are complacent and not fully engaged in their learning. As a result, they do not make as much progress. Teaching assistants are used well in some lessons, but in others they do not support pupils during the start of lessons when pupils are working on the carpet.

The impact of professional development and peer support within school is evident from the improvements to teaching and to the curriculum. Good use is made of the electronic whiteboards. Lessons make better use of teachers' assessments and for the older pupils, the 'learning conversations' have been effective in increasing motivation and engagement. However, opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with each other are not used consistently and are often missed, especially with younger pupils. Joint planning and good support from middle managers have led to an atmosphere of mutual support and greater urgency in making sure lessons engage and challenge pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has been enhanced by the introduction of the creative curriculum initiative and is good overall. This gives greater coherence and purpose to the work covered by pupils who say it is exciting and more meaningful. Good links within core subjects provide greater relevance and make pupils want to learn more. They enjoy the wide variety of activities they take part in, especially when it involves a visit off site or visitors to school. The work on a Tudor banquet was very well received by those who took part, and the Tudor dress made by staff and pupils was of the highest quality, resembling a museum piece. Staff are committed and work well

together to plan and deliver exciting lessons. Both staff and pupils commented that behaviour has improved in the afternoon as a direct consequence of an improved and more relevant curriculum. Pupils also commented that they felt it helped their work in literacy and numeracy. ICT skills are weak and are not used well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils take part in a variety of lunchtime and after school clubs, including sports.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides very good pastoral support and there are good procedures to ensure the safety of pupils. The school ensures a safe and supportive environment in which pupils develop good personal skills. A highly effective nurture group has made a very positive impact upon pupils' behaviour and their ability to play a responsible part in school. Good links with outside agencies and good support by the education welfare service have ensured a rise in attendance.

Pupils know their targets well and receive appropriate support to meet these. Additional support is provided to help pupils prepare for key stage tests. However, academic guidance is inconsistent across the school, ranging from good with older pupils to weak with the younger classes. The school rightly identifies it as an area for development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The very strong and inspirational leadership of the headteacher has given a clear direction and focus to the school. This has ensured a significant improvement in the quality of leadership and management at all levels, which is now good. The role of the deputy headteacher has been pivotal in coaching staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Middle management has improved and is generally good, with a strong nucleus that is well focused upon bringing about further improvements to the quality of provision. The members have the ability to prioritise and identify their own areas for development. The school is committed to improvement, and is building on its successes by consolidating the good work and sustaining improvements to standards and achievement.

The local authority has supported the school well through the Intensifying Support Programme, which has, along with support from staff within school, delivered good professional development for all staff. The school has taken greater responsibility for its own development and this reflects the increased capacity for improvement. Governance has improved and is now good. Governors are well informed and hold the school suitably to account.





## 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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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?	3

<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	3
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

12 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Western Springs Primary School, Rugeley WS15 2PD

I visited your school with Mrs Usher-Clark recently. As many of you are aware, I have been visiting every term for the last four terms. In fact, some of you know me so well you greet me like a lost friend. As always, I was impressed with how well you behave and how polite and courteous you are. Well done, as these attitudes have helped your school get better. It is with happiness that I must tell you that your school has improved and is now satisfactory with some good areas, but sadly, I will not be returning to see how well you are getting on. Your school no longer needs special measures, and this is because the whole school has got better. You have helped by working hard and behaving well. You have also improved your attendance and punctuality, although some of you could make more of an effort and make sure you get to school on time. I ask that you all help with this. As you said to me, the new curriculum is good and helps you learn better. Teaching has got better and is now satisfactory, with many lessons being good. We did feel, though, that lessons in Key Stage 1 could get better.

You all make better progress in school although standards remain very low, mainly because of poor progress in the past. Your school has improved how well you do in both English and mathematics and we would like them to improve science in the same way. We liked your new class set of computers but we felt that some of you had weak ICT skills, so we have asked your school to improve these.

Another reason why your school has got better is the very hard work of your headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff. They have concentrated on making sure you all do well in lessons and have improved all you do. They provide very good pastoral support. The help you get in organising your work and knowing how to get better has also improved. The school has improved all the areas we asked it to. Governors and the school have a far better understanding of what needs to be done. You are well protected and lessons have become more challenging.

I hope you all carry on improving and that you do well in the school before you go on to secondary school. I was very pleased to receive a photo of the three newly hatched chicks and feel sorry for them if they are really called H, M and I. Thanking you once again and wishing you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith Her Majesty's Inspector

**Annex B**

12 March 2008

Dear Pupils

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Michael Smith  
Her Majesty's Inspector