

# Weaverham Forest Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	111054
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	325283
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Jamieson
Headteacher	Mrs S How
Date of previous school inspection	February 2006
School address	Forest Street Weaverham Northwich CW8 3EY
Telephone number	01606 852171
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at improvement planning, records of meetings, samples of pupils' work, pupil performance data and 33 parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The current quality of pupils' learning and progress compared with that suggested by 2008 data.
- The school's use of pupil performance data in setting targets.
- The quality and impact of the school's partnerships with outside agencies.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than average and serves a socially and economically mixed area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The school's population is almost entirely of White British heritage. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Artsmark Silver awards. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. Childcare is provided on site, under separate management, before and after school, together with a pre-school group for 3- and 4-year olds. This provision was inspected at the same time as the main school and a separate report was issued.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Weaverham Forest Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Some aspects of its work are good, notably the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of pastoral care for all pupils. Good relationships between members of staff and pupils are evident in all classrooms and the bright and colourful displays around the school help to create a stimulating learning environment. Pupils enjoy much of the work set for them, but in a significant proportion of lessons the level of challenge is too low and this slows pupils' progress. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress in all areas of their learning. They make satisfactory progress during Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The satisfactory curriculum meets pupils' needs, with art and music being particularly strong. The school works well in partnership with external agencies and pupils benefit greatly from, for example, strong links with the local high school.

Effective management of pupils' behaviour by teachers ensures that lessons proceed without disruption, although behaviour around the school at break and lunchtimes is occasionally too boisterous. Nevertheless, pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident that members of staff will deal with any problems effectively. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of healthy lifestyles and the majority are keen to eat sensibly and take regular exercise. Most pupils are polite and friendly to each other and to visitors.

The school's leaders are committed to their work and have recently introduced a number of strategies designed to improve the quality of provision. For example, a new marking scheme has been introduced and the role of middle managers has been developed to increase their involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their specialist areas. While there are some early signs that these strategies are becoming established across the school, it is too early to see the impact on outcomes for pupils. The targets for pupils' attainment and progress set by the school are not always challenging enough, and although new systems for using tracking data have recently been introduced these are not yet developed well enough to ensure their effective use in target-setting. The governing body works hard and its members are very keen to support the school. However, they are not sufficiently involved in self-evaluation, particularly in relation to scrutinising pupils' achievement and standards. The school has a generally accurate overview of its strengths and weaknesses and has already recognised where improvements need to be made, particularly in relation to teaching and learning and the use of data. Consequently, its capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by improving the quality of teaching, particularly in relation to the level of challenge provided for all groups of pupils.
- Make more effective use of data on pupils' progress to ensure that challenging whole-school targets are set.
- Increase the involvement of the governing body in evaluating the school's work, including a clear focus on pupils' attainment and progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils 3

Current standards in English, mathematics and science are average, and pupils' progress, as seen in lessons, is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their learning and their achievement overall is satisfactory. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress and their attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. Throughout the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Data indicate that this has been the case over the last three years, although test results in 2008 were slightly lower than in the previous year. Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average, and the school works hard to promote regular attendance, especially for the minority of pupils with high levels of absence. Pupils' secure grasp of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' involvement in the school and wider community is satisfactory. Many take advantage of opportunities to undertake positions of responsibility, for example, by acting as 'reading buddies' for younger pupils, or by becoming members of the school council. The school's caring approach, combined with some good provision for personal education, contributes to pupils' social and moral development. Visitors to the school enhance pupils' cultural development, for example, visiting musicians enable pupils to enjoy music from a variety of cultures. Pupils have an adequate knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a few lessons being good. Most teachers show good leadership skills in the classroom that enable them to manage pupils' behaviour well. Use of ICT, and in particular the interactive whiteboards, is very effective in many lessons and helps to maintain the pace of learning. Skilled support staff are deployed well throughout the school and their work with individuals and identified groups, such as lower-attaining pupils, helps to keep pupils engaged and focused on their learning. However, in too many lessons there is insufficient challenge for pupils and this slows their progress. Occasionally, teachers give too much information to pupils rather than encouraging them to use their own initiative.

Assessment systems have recently been revised and a new whole-school approach to marking pupils' work has been introduced. There is a noticeable improvement in the quality of marking, which now provides pupils with more detailed guidance on how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning, but this aspect of the new approach is in its infancy, and guidance on how teachers should respond to pupils' self-assessment is not yet developed. Pupils have individual targets and most understand what they need to do to progress to the next level. However, pupils are not always given a timescale in which to achieve their targets.

In the past year, the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across a range of subjects. This has now been established across the school and, although still in its early stages, there is evidence that the quality of pupils' writing is improving. Teachers take care in planning opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum. Many pupils attend extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest are very popular.

The school cares for its pupils well. There is good provision for pupils with particular learning needs and they are given good guidance in lessons by teaching assistants. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported well through the 'nurture group', which is well-organised by skilled staff who are sensitive to the needs of individuals. This is a good feature of the school's work and enables these pupils to overcome barriers to their learning.

### *These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school's future and are beginning to communicate this effectively to others with management responsibilities. Subject leaders have been given greater responsibility and have responded well to this. As a result they have started to carry out some important collaborative work with the aim of improving pupils' achievement. Leaders have made important strides in tracking the progress of individual pupils and using the information to provide specific support for those in need of it. The staff are aware of the needs of individuals and groups, particularly those needing additional support. They satisfactorily promote equality of opportunity across the school and maintain an overview of pupils' progress. However, the school does not make sufficient use of data, particularly in setting whole school targets. Current targets are not always sufficiently challenging or ambitious.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. All the necessary checks are carried out and adequate attention is paid to health and safety.

Governors are very heavily involved in aspects of the school's work. They work hard to enhance its role within the local community. They have recently introduced some initiatives in response to parents' requests, for example, by publishing a newsletter to keep parents informed, and by becoming involved in a literacy 'afternoon tea' event in the Early Years Foundation Stage to advise parents on how they can best support their children's learning at home. Nevertheless, the governors are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work and their limited understanding of data relating to attainment and progress makes it difficult for them to carry out fully their role in challenging and supporting school leaders. The school's work is enhanced well through its partnerships with various external agencies. Productive links have been established with the local high school and some good collaborative work has been undertaken; for example, pupils from both schools recently played together in a band at a very successful school performance. There are also good links with a local group of schools, health professionals and the local music service. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Cohesion is being addressed within the school, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage with others from a diverse range of faiths and cultures.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in writing, due to well-focused support from adults. Children develop good personal skills and understand the importance of sharing and taking turns. They follow routines, feel secure and are happy and eager to learn. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children are cared for well. The classroom is organised well, so that children have full access to learning materials. The staff make the best use of the environment for outdoor learning, though some aspects of provision are restricted because of the limitations of the building. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. All members of staff have a thorough understanding of children's needs and use assessment data well to plan the next steps of learning for individual children. Much of the learning planned is based firmly upon children's interests, leading to enthusiasm and engagement. All welfare arrangements are firmly in place and close links with the on-site pre-school groups aid transition arrangements. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the parents and carers of pupils registered at Weaverham Forest Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent or carer has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 121 parents and carers registered at the school. This reflects a relatively low rate of response. Most the parents who responded were supportive of the school. Comments included praise for the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, 'My child is stimulated and interested by activities in the Reception class.' and 'The teachers make it such a happy place to be.' A few others commented on the good quality of pastoral care provided, through comments such as, 'Weaverham creates a caring environment for all.' A significant minority of parents expressed concern that the school did not keep them well-informed and a few felt that they would appreciate more guidance on how to support their child's learning at home. These issues have been recognised and the school has started to take action to tackle them.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	12	2	1



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



7 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weaverham Forest Primary School, Northwich, CW8 3EY

As you know, I visited your school recently together with another inspector so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a satisfactory school where the staff care for you well. You told us that the staff were kind and helpful to you, and we agree. Most of you behave well, especially during lessons, although one or two of you were less well behaved around the school during breaks and lunchtimes. We were impressed that you knew all about healthy eating and that so many of you take lots of exercise. It was also good to see that some of you help other pupils by being 'reading buddies'. This is really good work, so please do keep it up! It was good to talk to the pupils on the school council, who are very proud to represent your views. You told us that you feel safe in school and we were very glad to hear this.

Some of you are doing really good work in music. We heard all about the concert you did with the high school and it sounded so good we were sorry to have missed it! It was also lovely for us to listen to the steel pans rehearsal after school.

You told us that you enjoy practical activities during lessons and most of you were working well in the lessons that we observed. Your teachers want you to do really well and you make satisfactory progress, but some of the work seemed a little too easy for you. We have suggested that the staff make sure that you are always given work that makes you think really hard and encourages you to improve really quickly. We have also asked the school to look at how quickly you are making progress so that the school leaders can set targets for the school. The school governors are very keen to help the school get better and better, so we have suggested that they become even more involved in looking at how well you are all doing, especially in English, mathematics and science.

We hope that you continue to work well and send our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Julie Price Grimshaw  
Lead inspector

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