

# Windermere Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117217
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326550
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Blakelock

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	156
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	11
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bozena Lapinski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Windermere Avenue St. Albans Hertfordshire AL1 5QP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 853360
<b>Fax number</b>	01727 845887

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, although the numbers on roll are rising. An above average percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Children's attainment on entry is broadly typical of children nationally. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but a below average proportion has a statement of special educational need. A higher percentage of pupils than found nationally come from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils starting or leaving the school at other than expected times is above average. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, in which pupils make sound progress. The warm and welcoming nature of the school and the value that it places on all its pupils result in increasingly confident young learners who enjoy school and whose personal development is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has worked effectively in leading improvements, with great support from all of the staff. She has established systems that have helped the school move forward and has focused successfully on improving standards at Key Stage 2. However, the senior leadership team has not ensured that assessments of pupils' work are accurate or evaluated them robustly enough at all key stages. This has meant that the pace of pupils' progress varies across the school. Parents recognise the school's strengths and the progress it has made since the last inspection. There is particular support for the headteacher, who many parents feel is 'improving the school all the time'. One parent said, 'She is an inspiration who can combine discipline, authority, passion, care and fun, so well.'

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make satisfactory progress and respond well to the welcoming environment. The provision for outdoor activities is limited by the school's facilities. A strength of the school is its productive partnerships with agencies and organisations, which have benefited pupils. Standards rose to those broadly expected nationally at the end of Year 6 in 2008. This is due to good teaching through this stage, which accelerates pupils' progress. Progress through the school, however, is satisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent through Key Stage 1. The challenge in pupils' work is not always matched well enough to the levels at which pupils are working. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2, particularly in reading skills. Consistent strengths in teaching and learning include the good use of learning objectives in every lesson so that pupils understand what they are to learn, and good classroom management.

The school's continued emphasis on raising standards in literacy and numeracy has become more effective as themed weeks have been added into the satisfactory and developing curriculum. The extra opportunities to involve pupils in lessons, through learning by discovery and problem-solving have encouraged deeper learning. Similarly, practical activities to show pupils how to stay safe have added to their personal development.

Since the last inspection, pupils' personal development has improved and is good. It has been strengthened by the introduction of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) into the curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, including keeping fit and eating healthily. The school's growing opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities have encouraged their sensible attitudes, confidence and self-esteem. Attendance has improved for the majority, with the school's recently established procedures leaving parents and pupils in no doubt of the importance of good attendance. There are well-established links with parents. Pupils are cared for well day-to-day, with required practices in place to help ensure their health, safety and welfare.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children settle quickly into school because of good transition arrangements and clear routines. All required policies are in place to help ensure their safety and welfare. Children are happy and motivated by the bright and welcoming environment. From their first day, parents are

encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, thereby promoting effective home-school relationships. Children make good progress in their personal development, showing respect for other children and for adults. They benefit from working in groups and independently. A varied range of activities helps children to develop good social and personal skills and to discover the world around them. The lack of a permanent cover for the outdoor learning area, however, restricts the use of the full range of activities.

Teaching is satisfactory and results in children's sound progress overall through the EYFS. 'Phonics' teaching is helping children to develop their knowledge of letter and word sounds more quickly, and careful questioning of children leads to a clear focus for learning. Planning of work and procedures for assessing children's learning are developing under the sound leadership of the new leader of the stage. By the end of the EYFS, most children reach standards that are average in all areas of learning, and their personal development is good.

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

- Raise standards at Key Stage 1 and particularly in reading, by providing a good level of challenge in all lessons, including for more able pupils.
- Ensure that assessments of pupils' work are accurate and evaluated more robustly in order to quicken the rate of pupils' progress.
- Provide facilities in the EYFS outdoor learning area to enable children to have access to the full range of activities in poor weather.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but who have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory overall progress through the school from their starting points. At the end of Key Stage 1, assessments are below average. The teaching does not provide a suitable level of challenge in all lessons, including for more able pupils. Pupils reached below average standards in writing and mathematics in 2008, performing less well in reading than in the other subjects.

Pupils' progress accelerates through Key Stage 2. In 2008, evidence from pupils' records and results shows that standards rose broadly to those expected nationally. Every pupil attained the expected standard in science and a higher proportion of pupils reached expected standards in English and mathematics than in previous years. This improvement continues this academic year. There is some variation in year groups between the progress made by boys and girls, with girls often reaching higher standards by the end of Year 6, but teaching methods and learning styles suit boys and girls equally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, because school staff and outside agencies meet their needs.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and staying safe. They are keen to take part in after school sports clubs and know the importance of taking part in physical activities and eating healthily. They behave well in classes and around the school. Pupils relish being given responsibilities and participate in the school community, through initiatives such as the

school council and acting as playground buddies and play-leaders. They contribute well to the local community and raise funds for national and international charities. The vast majority enjoy school as a result. Attendance has improved steadily and it is now nearing the national average, encouraged by the school's initiatives. Pupils' cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through their work in art and music. They are gaining a reasonable understanding of other ways of life and cultures but this aspect is not as strong as their spiritual, moral or social development. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for secondary school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although good through Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall and results in pupils making sound progress. There are common strengths. Learning objectives are always shared with pupils and are regularly revisited during the lesson. Classroom management is good and interactive whiteboards add to the variety of learning methods. In good lessons, there are increasing opportunities for pupils to assess their own work, which encourages their critical thinking. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work in pairs, as well as independently. Although marking of pupils' work has improved, and usually tells them what they have achieved, it does not regularly tell them how to make further progress. The main factor slowing pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 is the level of challenge in tasks, which is not always a close enough match to the levels at which pupils are working, to ensure better than satisfactory progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The recently revised national frameworks for literacy and numeracy are being implemented satisfactorily. This approach is contributing to raising standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Appropriate provision is in place for pupils who find learning difficult and is being developed adequately for those pupils who have particular gifts and talents. The recently introduced creative curriculum is developing links between subjects and providing more practical learning and skills based opportunities. French for all Key Stage 2 pupils is provoking interest from pupils. They appreciate the theme weeks, such as the recent book and art weeks. Visitors, visiting places of interest and a reasonable range of after school activities enrich pupils' learning. Residential trips for older pupils extend personal experiences and contribute effectively to their personal development, allowing them to develop a wide range of skills. The SEAL project is having a good impact on pupils' personal development and on their understanding of safe and healthy living. This is reinforced by the school's sports partnership, which offers pupils access to a greater variety of sporting activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils feel well cared for and know who to ask for help. They are confident and happy because relationships are good. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Good links with outside agencies provide additional support. As a result, pupils with challenging behaviour, those who

are vulnerable, newcomers and pupils who find learning difficult receive the help that they need to enable them to make satisfactory progress.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Senior managers are increasingly using the information from a new computer programme to identify individuals and groups of pupils who require additional support, so that they can make better progress. All pupils have targets to help them improve their work in reading, writing and in mathematics, although these are not used regularly in all lessons. Teaching assistants provide sound guidance in all lessons, to enable pupils to move forward in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has created a common sense of purpose and agreed priorities amongst staff. Senior management's vision and goals are shared by a committed staff, working well as a team. The leadership ensures that community matters receive proper attention. The school responds to the diverse backgrounds of pupils, providing wide-ranging support for them and their families and promoting their social, emotional and academic development. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by their work in school and the local community. Pupils show respect and tolerance for each other. The school knows where it needs to improve. For example, systems have been put into place, which have enabled pupils' accelerating progress through Key Stage 2. Improved planning and monitoring are leading to consistent practices and a distinctive ethos; for example, year group reviews provoke searching questions about standards and provision. However, senior leadership has not been rigorous enough in checking the accuracy of assessments of pupils' work in Key Stage 1. Neither has it analysed them rigorously enough to bring about faster progress. Subject leaders are growing into their roles, led well by the deputy headteacher. Governors oversee the school's work competently, confirming its satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windermere Primary School, St Albans, AL1 5QP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited you recently. We enjoyed joining you in lessons and hearing from you about what goes on in your school. You have settled quickly into the new school year. That includes the new Reception children who are having fun and learning lots of new things. You enjoy learning outdoors but sometimes the weather stops you. We have asked your headteacher to look into this so that you can learn outside all year round. This letter will tell you what else we have found out about your school.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. The headteacher and all of the staff work hard for you and care for you well day-to-day. You reach average standards by the end of Year 6 and make satisfactory progress through the school. Teaching is good from Year 3 to Year 6. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that the work you are given at Key Stage 1 is always at the right level to help you make at least good progress all the way through the school. That will mean that standards will rise in all subjects.

We could see that you enjoy school and are happy here. Your attendance has improved - well done! Try to make it even better! We also liked the way that many of you are helping to run the school. It is helping you to develop important skills, such as working in teams and making decisions. You told us that you like learning for yourselves and problem solving in lessons. You also like the new curriculum, because it lets you learn through themes and in practical and creative ways.

All of the staff want you all to do as well as you can in your work. To help ensure this, your headteacher is going to make sure that the tests and assessments that you have are always checked carefully. This will ensure that the staff know exactly what needs to be done to help you to make more progress.

I send you our best wishes for the future.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector