

# West Minster Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118438
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326827
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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>	3–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	331
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	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Bromiley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Bayford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2006
<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>	St George's Avenue Sheerness ME12 1ET
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 662178
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 581853

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<b>Age group</b>	3–10
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school, formerly a first school educating pupils up to age nine, and now developing into a school for pupils aged three to eleven years. This follows the local authority's decision to reorganise the age range of transfer in the area. Currently the oldest pupils in the school are in Year 5. Children begin the Nursery part-time in the January or September following their third birthday, depending on available spaces and attend either morning or afternoon. In 2006, the school became part of a federation of two schools under the leadership of an executive headteacher, the previous headteacher of West Minster Primary, with a designated head of school in each of the two establishments. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is more than double the national average. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than that nationally. The school has its own breakfast club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: the standards being reached; pupils' achievement; the rigour of monitoring of classroom practice and the use of assessment.

Since it was last inspected in 2006 the quality of education provided at West Minster Primary School has declined. The school has not maintained its previous impetus because of significant staff changes and a change of its character, which has involved the headteacher becoming executive headteacher of this and another school. The head of school initially did not receive the full support needed to establish her in this role. Consequently, standards have fallen markedly at the end of Year 2 in the last two years, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, and are very low. Overall, pupils' achievements are inadequate, although they are better and improving faster in Years 3 to 5 than in other parts of the school. Leaders and managers are aware of the decline in pupils' achievement and this is now being addressed. However, although pupils now make satisfactory progress in lessons, as a result of improvements to teaching and learning, this has not yet had an impact on improving overall achievement.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and have good relationships with one another. They have a good knowledge of keeping themselves safe and healthy. They practise this knowledge in the choices they make, such as engaging in sport and choosing healthy food options. Pupils are kind and considerate and take an interest in their work. They are keen to learn and anxious to please. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough, for example in the way pupils should present their work. This is not developing pupils' potential to the full. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently rigorous in recent years and this led to a decline in quality. Teaching and learning has recently improved due to better monitoring and sharing of good practice. However, inconsistencies in practice still remain. A strong feature of the school is the staff's care for the pupils, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Although there have been recent improvements in assessment, systems to track pupils' progress are not yet as rigorous as they could be. Not all teachers are making effective use of this assessment information to ensure that lesson activities are pitched at the right level for all pupils in order that they can make good progress. Pupils' attendance has improved, following concerted action, although, despite the school's good efforts, some parents still take pupils away on holidays in term time. The curriculum is satisfactory and at a point of planning for renewal.

Parents are generally happy with the school, and most are satisfied with their children's education. They find the teachers approachable and helpful and they praise the induction arrangements which enable the children to settle into school life. However, there is some expression of concern about a decline in the school's effectiveness coinciding with the headteacher's new role as an executive headteacher and specific examples of concern about the quality of teaching in particular classes.

The re-invigorated leadership and the rigorous support the local authority provides have given the school the momentum to improve. Leaders have identified accurately where improvements are required. Relevant strategies have been put in place to improve teaching and learning and,

as a result, pupils have a much better attitude to school and are beginning to make better progress. There is a clear determination and resolve to improve which is beginning to have an impact. Capacity to improve is satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

The children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below expectations for their age. Teaching is satisfactory overall but it ranges in quality and the children make noticeably less progress where it is less effective. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills. Staff work well as a team to monitor children's ongoing progress, which supports the planning for children's next steps in their learning. However, the tracking of children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet fully developed in all the different areas of learning, which limits staff's overview of pupils' development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily. Children's well-being is at the heart of its work. There is a good mix of child-initiated learning and small groups of teacher-led activities. Children who have difficulty with early reading and writing skills are well supported. Good use of specialist staff in music supports the range and quality of the curriculum. For example, individual children gained confidence by 'conducting' an orchestra of the other children while they explored and experimented with different instruments. The staff recognise that the outside area could be more effectively used to promote children's learning.

Effective induction procedures make a good contribution to children settling in quickly to the Nursery. Children feel safe, have positive attitudes and learn to relate well with each other. They have a good understanding of the rules and routines, including when to wash their hands, and remind each other when an apron is needed for a particular activity. Good links with parents ensure that parents are aware of their children's progress.

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

- Improve standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Enhance the rigour and quality of monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching and learning, particularly in relation to teachers' expectations of pupils.
- Develop the use of assessment, including marking, data and tracking, in order to further accelerate pupils' rates of progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Results at the end of Year 2 have fallen sharply in the last two years and are very low in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils do not achieve well enough in these areas, particularly writing. The school commenced a new approach to teaching letter sounds in September 2008 to improve pupils' progress in reading and writing. While this is beginning to bear fruit, its impact is not yet shown in a significant improvement in standards. No Year 2 pupil reached higher levels in reading and writing in 2008, although a few look likely to do so this year. Pupils' progress in lessons in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory and improving. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 still need

to make up for ground lost during their earlier years at the school. The attainment of pupils in Year 5 in English, mathematics and science is broadly average, although their handwriting and presentations skills are weaker. Too many pupils do not demonstrate effective skills in information and communication technology (ICT) because the school does not have a systemised programme for the development of skills in this area. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to other pupils in the different key stages.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are very keen to work and try hard. They listen attentively and have very good relationships with one another. Pupils enjoy school. They have a good understanding of safe and healthy living. They know about road safety. A group of pupils surveyed others to find out their preferred fruits and, based on this, set up their own fruit shop which they organise and run. They order and sell the produce, which contributes well to their economic understanding and supports pupils' health. Members of the school council meet with the district council to discuss matters, such as local sport. Pupils have very positive attitudes to other pupils who have physical difficulties. Attendance is satisfactory but too many holidays are being taken in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff have very positive relationships with pupils and manage them very well. The quality of teaching and learning has recently improved due to more rigorous monitoring of practice. For example, teachers now prepare lessons satisfactorily but the activities are not always planned sharply enough to really challenge pupils of all abilities. The pace of learning overall is satisfactory but it is sometimes not brisk enough to ensure better progress over time. Not all staff have high enough expectations of pupils, particularly of their handwriting and presentation, and its quality is too variable as a result. In some lessons in Years 1 and 2, teachers' explanations about the activities children are to undertake are too long and reduce the time for learning. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to present the learning outcomes of lessons to pupils, however, not all teachers share the criteria for success well enough. Exceptionally in a Year 5 literacy lesson, good questioning from the teacher drew out from pupils what it was they needed to do in order to be successful and this notably led to improvements in the quality of their written work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Religious education and music are strengths and are supported by specialist teaching. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument in Years 4 and 5. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use computers, but the school lacks a structured scheme to develop pupils' ICT skills sequentially. The provision for pupils who experience difficulties learning basic skills is generally satisfactory. However, computers are not used as well as they might be with these pupils. The school is at an early stage in planning a more creative curriculum and has draft outline proposals, but these do not clearly indicate

how pupils will use and develop key subject skills across the curriculum. The school is well prepared for the compulsory introduction of a modern foreign language and is working out the best arrangement for the teaching of the two languages that it has begun. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good. The family liaison officer provides good support for pupils who need additional help, and is developing family support well. Good links with a range of external agencies assist pupils with specific difficulties. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and pupils are well supervised. Despite the school's good efforts and effective links with the education welfare officer, attendance rates are affected by term-time holidays.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Marking is inconsistent across the school. It is often encouraging but insufficiently developmental to support pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils have targets, but some of these are too general for pupils to know if they have been reached. The tracking of pupils' progress is developing and improving quickly, but in the past assessment information has not been used well enough to identify pupils who are underachieving. The information is not yet being consistently used to set targets with enough challenge for all pupils, in planning lessons to match individual needs.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's support for another school under the new federation arrangements had led to a reduction in the quality of monitoring of teaching and learning, resulting in a decline in standards and achievement. However, the new head of school, in partnership with the executive headteacher, has taken measures to redress this. Initiatives have been introduced which have led to improvements to teaching and learning and there is a recognition that these need to be implemented even more rigorously across the school. The school has not always set challenging enough end of key stage targets. However, these have recently been revised to provide more challenge but it is too early to determine their impact on pupils' progress.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is closely involved in the local community and cluster of schools, but is still to widen its horizons effectively to introduce pupils to contrasting lives and environments.

The school's leaders have a realistic idea of its strengths and weaknesses and do not flinch from the challenge of regaining its former position as a good school. In an effective partnership with its School Improvement Partner, the school has good plans in place to address areas of weakness and improve outcomes for pupils. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge to the headteacher and is developing its expertise and refining its organisation, to enable it to have a better impact on school improvement.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

<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	2
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	4
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	4
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?	Yes

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

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Minster Primary School, Sheerness ME12 1ET

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your school. You clearly enjoy school and also meeting your friends each day. We were interested to learn about your fruit scheme which you organise yourselves. What a good idea. You have a good understanding of healthy living and this scheme certainly helps. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the good relationships that you have with one another and with your teachers.

Your school has been through some leadership and management changes since the last inspection and your headteacher has also had the extra responsibility of another school. It has lost its way a little during these changes and results have fallen. Unfortunately it has not continued to develop as well as it was doing. Because of this, we have given your school a notice to improve. This means that the school will be inspected again in about a year. In the meantime, we have made some key recommendations for the school's future development. I have listed these below. We have asked the school:

- to improve the standards you reach and the progress you make, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for the younger pupils
- to keep an even better eye on the quality of teaching and learning and help teachers so that much more of the teaching and learning is of a higher quality
- to improve marking so it is more helpful to you, and also to use test results and the records of your progress in order to help you make better progress. We hope that you will continue to work hard and to do your best. Thank you once again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector