

Waterfoot Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119199
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326968
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	300
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Mills
Headteacher	Mr Simon Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Thornfield Avenue Waterfoot Rossendale Lancashire BB4 9AP
Telephone number	01706 215539
Fax number	01706 215539

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Waterfoot is a larger than average primary school in the Rossendale Valley. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Of the small proportion of pupils from other ethnic heritages very few are at an early stage of learning English. There are a few looked after children. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need is also below average. Three classes provide for Reception age children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school amalgamated with a neighbouring school, a mile from the main site in September 2007. Forty pupils attend at that site. All pupils are to be accommodated on a single site from September 2009. A new school building is planned to open in September 2010. The period of amalgamation coincided with some unavoidable instability and disruption to staffing. The school is recognised as a National Healthy school and has gained the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and uses its resources effectively to provide good value for money. As the result of excellent well focused leadership the recent amalgamation has ensured that strengths are capitalised upon and all pupils have benefited from the changes. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly in their agreement with the measures taken to bring the schools together and to sustain a high quality of education. They appreciate the time and care taken to promote the pupils' excellent personal development and to develop the pupils' sense of responsibility towards themselves and others. The views of the parents and carers are justified by the pupils' eagerness to attend school, their very positive attitudes and their exemplary behaviour.

Achievement is good. Standards are slightly above average and improving in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. All pupils are making good progress after a period of underachievement for some. Through careful analysis the school recognised that standards in writing and in calculation are lower than they might be. Interventions put into place are beginning to raise standards. The most able pupils do not always do as well as they can, but new strategies are beginning to deal with this.

A strength of the school is the excellent pastoral and academic care and guidance provided. This is particularly effective for the more vulnerable learners such those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language. This results in pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. They make informed choices about living healthily and by Year 6 pupils are very mature and well prepared to move on to secondary education. Pupils are safe and secure and enjoy their education. Excellent academic support and guidance are in place, based on the careful tracking of progress. Where pupils' progress slows, positive interventions are made that very quickly help to bring them back on track to meet their challenging targets. This is beginning to boost the performance of the more able pupils so that they do as well as they can.

The quality of teaching is good overall and includes some that is outstanding. Teachers use assessment well to help pupils understand the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers manage their classes efficiently so that there is a good atmosphere for learning. The curriculum is good and is extended and enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities. This is reflected in the achievement of external awards. The quality of art work is a strength. The marking of pupils' work is good and provides pupils with excellent guidance about what they need to do to improve. Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils are happy and secure in school. The parents of pupils who have joined the school have great confidence in all that is provided. 'The staff and pupils are so friendly and caring' and 'the school has done everything they can to help our children settle in', are typical comments. All pupils are included and given opportunities to succeed. Good links with local schools and the community further enrich the curriculum and lead to good community cohesion.

Leadership and management are effective and have ensured good provision and increasingly good achievement, resulting in the successful integration of pupils from the neighbouring school. The headteacher makes an outstanding contribution in ensuring a clear direction for the school's development, based on raising achievement and engaging all associated with the school. Effective team work enables all staff to be involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Governors hold the school to account well and have a good understanding

of strengths and areas to improve. Together with the staff, governors recognise the need to minimise the impact on standards and achievement of changes resulting from the influx of new pupils involved in the amalgamation. This is to be done through good strategies to make the transition as least disruptive as possible. Effective strategies for managing the amalgamation and the good progress since the previous inspection indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. As a result children thrive in a stimulating, happy and caring environment. Provision is good with outstanding features. Two Reception classes have been integrated to form a dedicated Early Years Foundation Stage unit enabling children to consistently access good quality learning resources. At the second building, Reception age children are included in a class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, providing support and challenge from the older pupils. Most children start school with skills which are typical for their age. They make good progress with most children reaching average standards by the start of Year 1. There is a good balance between adult led activities and those chosen by the children. Staff use assessment information well to set targets and there is an effective, ongoing monitoring system which allows children to make good progress in their work. The personal development and well-being of children is excellent because they are consistently encouraged to become independent learners. The welfare of children is promoted in an outstanding way. Excellent induction procedures enable children to settle quickly and happily into school, understanding the routines and what is expected. Parents and carers are very positive about the procedures and about the quality of information they receive about the progress of their children. Teaching is good because effective planning provides assessment opportunities and activities are lively and interesting. Children develop confidence and independence. They are stimulated by the learning environment and activities are suitably challenging. The curriculum is good overall and is well based on purposeful, practical activities. Strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development enables children to make excellent progress in this area. In both buildings there is good use of stimulating outdoor areas which enhances learning throughout the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sustain high standards and good achievement as the pupils move to one site, taking care to ensure that transitional issues for pupils are carefully considered and provided for.
- Ensure that the strategies for boosting the achievement of the more able pupils are successfully implemented.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement across the school is good. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are typical for their age and start Year 1 with broadly average standards. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 reaching standards that are slightly above average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average in 2008. The school identified relative weaknesses in writing and mental calculations and interventions have successfully closed the gap. Detailed records show that most pupils made good progress in the last school year. They also show that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above

average standards in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence, including pupils' work and lesson observations, confirms this improved picture of standards. The school has put in place measures to enable the most able pupils to reach the higher levels; while these are beginning to take effect the full impact is yet to be seen in assessment outcomes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after children, and those learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress in this inclusive school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils make outstanding progress in developing the personal skills and attributes which help them to develop into thoughtful and mature young people. In every classroom a culture exists where adults and children are valued for what they contribute. School councillors take account of everyone's view in making decisions for the whole school. For example, their suggestions for the new school building. In classroom circle time activities, pupils learn to reflect on sensitive issues and are constantly encouraged to set challenging goals. This is reflected in the excellent way they carry out roles of responsibility and develop skills to support them in the future. For example, older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger children. Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Above average attendance indicates they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and this has a positive impact on the good progress made. Attendance is good and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their local and wider communities. The strong focus on the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) gives pupils a positive start to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, including some that is outstanding. Teachers know pupils and their families well fostering good motivation and enjoyment of learning. Pupils are keen to respond and their self-esteem is boosted by the ready recognition of their efforts and encouragement from the staff. Lesson objectives clearly indicate what is to be taught and learned. Teaching provides good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects such as science and history. The consistency of good learning ensures pupils make good progress throughout their time in school. Because teachers use a good range of activities they capture and hold the pupils' attention and make them keen to learn. Most progress is made where tasks are challenging for pupils of all abilities and there are strategies in place to ensure the most able achieve equally well. On a few occasions opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas are underdeveloped. This slows the pace of learning especially for the most able. Assessment takes place regularly and the information is used to plan lessons ensuring that activities are matched to pupils' varying needs. Marking of work is consistently good and offers excellent guidance on how to improve work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is developing well to provide good academic opportunities that all pupils enjoy. It is responsive to the pupils' needs and has evolved with the introduction of a thematic approach to learning that captures the interest of all learners. Work in lessons offers opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in many subjects, to explore their artistic flair and use ICT to support learning both in school and at home. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of sports, performing arts and extra-curricular learning. Opportunities for creativity and self-expression positively enrich pupils' personal development. A strong programme of personal, social and health education contributes positively to pupils' impressive personal development. There is an increasing range of activities, including links with a child in Gambia and learning to speak French. These links help pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world which contributes positively to community cohesion. The school takes advantage of local opportunities for historical studies and field trips that effectively take learning outside the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent care, guidance and academic support. The pupils say the environment is safe. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Staff are exceptionally committed to the well-being of pupils. Stringent mechanisms promote above average attendance. Those pupils who need extra help are identified early and help is readily available. The quality of support is good and well led by the special educational needs coordinator. There is smooth transition between classes and Key Stages and a full and varied programme of activities to prepare pupils for the next phase of their education. Pupils are very well informed about their targets and they are given excellent guidance about how to improve. The school is able to do this because it knows all its pupils very well and is therefore being able to judge exactly what they need to know to make good progress. Progress is tracked robustly using a very rigorous system based on very effective assessment procedures. Any underachievement indicated is being dealt with swiftly and effectively and the need to improve the achievement of the more able pupils is in hand. Marking is carried out regularly and the feedback to pupils leads to rapid improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives an excellent lead in establishing a clear direction for the school's development. Any changes made to effectively bring the two schools together have been carefully considered and successfully involve pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors. Where standards are high they have been sustained, with improvements to ensure that outcomes are consistent across both sites. This reflects the school's good capacity to improve. Unavoidable staff changes are managed well; managers and governors know what they need to do to improve the school further. Their challenge is to sustain the good provision and outcomes as pupils come together on one site and look forward to the new building. All staff have good attitudes and skills to take the school forward and they give good support to the headteacher. Challenging targets drive the school's development. Planning is good, and priorities are appropriate to guide

further improvement. Although modest in some areas, the school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate. The monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning is regular and rigorous. It ensures a common purpose among staff. Provision for promoting community cohesion is good. Pupils appreciate the importance of tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups, cultures and religions because they receive effective teaching about the school's place in the wider community.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

18 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterfoot Primary School, Lancashire, BB4 9AP

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed our inspection and the conversations we had with you. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are getting on with your learning.

We found that:

- you are being given a good education at Waterfoot and have extended a very warm welcome to the children from Cloughfold
- you work hard and reach good standards
- you are taught well; the staff make your lessons interesting and enjoyable and they make sure you have the help and support you need
- you have a good curriculum; this is helping you to develop excellent personal skills and we could see how much you enjoy all your learning activities
- the school is very well led and the headteacher and the staff are always on the lookout for ways to make it even better
- the adults in school look after you and care for you extremely well; your behaviour is excellent and you are polite and caring young people.

All of this means that your school is a very happy place to be. To help make it even better, we have asked it to look at ways of helping the most able pupils make the progress they are capable of. I have asked the school to make sure that you have the help you need to work together when you are all in one building.

Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Onyon

Lead inspector