

Walbottle Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108448
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	337077
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony Strong
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Tarn
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, and an additional inspector who was present for the first morning of the inspection to support the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and equalities. Ten lessons were observed, involving all teachers at least once. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, groups of pupils and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked in detail at safeguarding and other school policies, school improvement plans and information about the current standards and progress of pupils across the school. Eighty parental questionnaires, 16 staff and 56 pupil questionnaires were also analysed.

- current standards and pupils' progress
- the impact of provision on children's outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of actions to improve attendance
- the impact of leadership and management across the school in raising standards and improving pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Walbottle Village is smaller than the average primary school. A higher than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Nearly all of the pupils are of White British heritage. There are proportionately more boys than girls. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or learning disabilities and this is also the case for the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including the Healthy School standard, ActiveMark Gold, the Eco Silver Award and the Basic Skills Award. The privately provided out of school club, based on the school's site, was inspected by another Ofsted inspector on March 3. A separate report has been published.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Leaders have failed to halt the general decline in attainment since the last inspection. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has fallen from above average to average. At Key Stage 2, attainment has fluctuated. It is now low and progress is inadequate in English, mathematics and science. This is, in part, due to a history of staff absences which have resulted in significant periods of disruption to pupils' learning, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. Leaders have taken recent actions to improve matters. Inspection found evidence of faster rates of pupil progress; however, improvement is not rapid enough to tackle the significant underperformance evident. Current tracking information indicates the school will not meet its challenging summer 2010 Key Stage 2 targets. That said, due to carefully targeted support and care, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make generally satisfactory progress in their learning.

Some aspects of the school's work are good. These include the extent to which pupils feel safe and adopt healthy life styles, the quality of provision, outcomes for pupils and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. From below average starting points when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 they have achieved skill levels at least equal to, and sometimes better than, those expected for their age. These gains are not being capitalised upon.

During the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to good but it is not consistently good enough to make sure all pupils catch up the ground lost in previous years. Regular assessment of pupils' work now takes place but there is little evidence in teachers' planning, or activities in lessons, that this information is used consistently well enough to pitch lessons at the different abilities of pupils in their mixed-year group classes. This reduces the progress of higher-ability pupils, although tracking information shows that more pupils will attain higher levels this year than last. Assessment information is better-used to target interventions for lower-ability pupils, and this is making a difference to their enjoyment and progress in small-group learning opportunities. Marking, when used effectively, is informative and helps pupils to know how well they have done and what to do next, but the school's policy is inconsistently adhered to. The satisfactory curriculum has been enhanced to provide a stronger focus on numeracy and writing. Writing activities such as the 'Big Write' are making a positive

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difference, but it is too early to see the impact on standards overall. Standards in science are low because planning and delivery of the subject do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and investigative skills progressively.

Leaders' ability to drive and embed improvement is inadequate and hampered by a lack of a shared commitment of all staff to work together to tackle the issues facing the school. The role of coordinators and the contribution of staff in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, the school's work, and developing strategies for improvement are underdeveloped. As a result, self-evaluation is not always based on accurate information and is therefore over-optimistic in some of its judgements. The governing body is aware that the school is underperforming. Governors work hard to ensure a safe, well-resourced, inviting school and grounds. However, they have not provided enough challenge to ensure leaders tackle the decline in standards quickly enough and therefore their effectiveness is judged inadequate overall. Because of the weaknesses identified above, the school is not providing value for money and its capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. The number of pupils in the Key Stage 1 classroom regularly exceeds national requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and hasten the rates of learning and progress in English, mathematics lessons by ensuring:
 - the school's regular assessment information is always used to inform planning so that work is consistently matched to pupils' needs
 - all teaching interests and challenges pupils to achieve their best
 - marking is always informative and enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Raise attainment and ensure pupils' make progressive gains in their learning in science by:
 - developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and the resources to teach the subject well.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring staff work together cohesively to support improvement by involving them more systematically in the evaluation of the school's work and in improvement planning
 - holding the staff to account for their pupils' progress
 - tackling staff absence rates
 - developing the role of coordinators and staff in monitoring their areas of responsibility by observing lessons, reviewing planning and pupils' work
 - ensuring the governing body holds the school's leaders to account for tackling weaknesses

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- ensuring the school improvement plan outlines key actions, measurable outcomes and precisely how success will be evaluated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Evidence from lessons seen during the inspection, analysis of pupils' books and the school's current assessment data, indicate that standards remain low. Pupils are now making broadly satisfactory progress in their lessons in English and mathematics due to a better focus of interventions and strategies, such as enabling pupils in Years 5 and 6 to be taught separately for these subjects. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to support small groups of pupils during lesson time and they are beginning to make faster gains in their learning. There is evidence that some pupils are making better progress in class and the identified underachievement of boys is beginning to be tackled more successfully. Despite these actions, progress is not yet fast enough.

Pupils say they feel very safe and that staff teach them well about risks and how to be safe in school and in the local community. The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire also say the school keeps their children safe, although a few wrote concerns about bullying. The school has identified, from pupil questionnaires, that some pupils are worried about bullying. Experts are currently coming into school to deliver bullying awareness sessions. Pupils said bullying happens but is rare, mainly in the form of name calling. They were adamant that issues are dealt with quickly once any adult was informed. Behaviour is generally good as pupils move around the school and the well-resourced outdoor areas. Pupils are polite, friendly and generally supportive and caring of one another. However, in satisfactory lessons their behaviour is passive. Some parents, pupils and staff have expressed concerns about how successfully behaviour issues are tackled. Pupils make good efforts to adopt healthy lifestyles and cite many examples of how they are taught to be healthy. They feel they get a good deal from the many interesting sporting activities; many are undertaken through partnership working with the local secondary school's junior sports leaders. Pupils are proud to belong to their school and local village and their contribution to both is satisfactory. As a result of good actions taken, attendance rates have improved to average. Despite low, but improving, levels of basic skills, pupils' personal qualities, team working skills, promptness to lessons, their developing information and communication technology skills and good arrangements for transition into secondary school all help them to be satisfactorily prepared for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between adults and pupils were evident in all lessons observed and this ensured a generally calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy it when there are opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups and this promotes their personal and social development effectively. No inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection and some were good. However, the history of staff absence and high turnover of temporary teachers has left the school with much catching up to do and this has had a significant impact on standards of attainment and progress. Overall, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not always high enough because information from the now regular assessments of their work is not used systematically enough to plan learning and set tasks appropriately matched to all pupils' needs; this is critical in lessons where there are two age-groups. Sometimes there is too much teacher-talk and not enough opportunity for pupils to develop their independent learning skills or develop their ideas. In such lessons, pupils become passive and do not involve themselves fully in their learning. The curriculum meets requirements and has rightly been adapted to improve literacy and numeracy skills; this is occasionally to the detriment of science. It is enriched effectively by well-attended extra-curricular clubs and visitors to school. The school takes effective action to support and care for pupils. Pupils say they feel well-cared for and there is always someone there to help them in times of need. Lunchtimes are well supervised and pupils enjoy playing games with the wide range of equipment available. The family-group pastoral system ensures pupils are well-known and supported by their key adult. The work of the parent-support adviser is highly regarded and, alongside the strong partnerships with a range of agencies, the

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school successfully supports potentially vulnerable children and their families in times of need.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching, books and marking regularly. Recently developed planning and performance meetings between leaders and coordinators are helping to identify underachieving pupils so that more targeted and appropriate interventions can take place. However, the effectiveness of leadership is compromised by lack of a common sense of purpose and shared drive for improvement across the school. Leaders are not successfully holding staff to account for the progress of the pupils they teach. The school's improvement planning processes are not sharp enough to identify exactly what needs to be improved and by how much, because targets and baselines are not clear enough, actions have few specific timescales, and targets do not take account of the rapid improvement in progress needed to make sure pupils are more successful in their learning. Leaders take every effort to include all pupils in the life of the school. For example, teachers have been trained in a language programme to aid communication with pupils who have complex communication needs. Incidents of racist behaviour are rare and any that do occur are tackled robustly. A wide range of partnerships has been secured to successfully promote pupils' well-being; partnerships have had less impact on pupils' learning. Recent initiatives by leaders are beginning to make a difference to pupils' progress in lessons, but have not been in place long enough to narrow the gap between the performance of pupils in school and that found nationally or for similar pupils in comparable schools. Consequently, the school's effectiveness in promoting opportunities and tackling discrimination is inadequate. Great efforts have been made to secure the school site and grounds and to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Pupils have a good understanding of their local community and the wider community of Newcastle. For example, some pupils undertook a very successful project with refugees and asylum seekers which culminated in a presentation at the new city library. The school's work makes sure pupils have a good understanding of communities and cultures from across the world. Leaders are aware more needs to be done to ensure pupils have a better understanding of the diversity of communities across Britain. Plans are in place to tackle this.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities and stimulating experiences that extend into the well-resourced outdoor area. Children are encouraged to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning and develop their social skills well. Careful planning and regular assessment ensure children make good progress from their starting points. They form good relationships with each other and with adults and engage well in their learning. Their enjoyment is clear for all to see. Partnerships and communications with parents and carers are good, as was evident in discussions with parents and the parental questionnaires. Children's safety is paramount; staff are suitably trained and welfare requirements are well-met. The key worker role is developed to good effect. Particular attention is paid to make sure vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included fully in the setting and can benefit from all that is on offer.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: 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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Two thirds of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most were very positive. A high proportion values the way the school promotes children's feelings of safety and promotion of healthy lifestyles. This concurred with inspection evidence. They also believe the school makes sure their child is well prepared for the next steps in their education. This is the case for pupils' transitions to secondary school and in the development of personal qualities. However, because of the low level of basic skills and satisfactory attendance, the inspection has judged this to be satisfactory overall. A few parents feel that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with successfully. Inspectors judge that behaviour is satisfactory. A number of parents made additional comments. Nine were of a positive nature and eleven more critical. Five expressed concerns about bullying, but the evidence from the inspection suggests that this is rare. Experts are currently coming into school to deliver bullying-awareness sessions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walbottle Village Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 122 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	42	37	52	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	33	46	36	51	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	38	34	48	6	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	35	36	51	7	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	28	39	34	48	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	39	33	46	8	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	41	39	55	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	32	38	54	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	34	41	58	5	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	30	38	54	7	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	31	40	56	6	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	34	35	49	8	11	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	44	34	48	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Walbottle Village Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE15 8JL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I would like to offer a special thanks to those of you who spoke to me during visits to classrooms, in the hall, and as I went around the school. I found you all to be polite, friendly and caring of one another. It is good that you believe you are encouraged to live healthy lives, and feel safe in school. You say you enjoy the range of sporting and dance activities available after the school day. A few of you and your parents have expressed concerns about bullying. The school is aware of this and you are currently having bullying-awareness sessions. I found that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress.

However, there are some important weaknesses that have led me to judge the school as inadequate overall. Looking at your progress in lessons, your books and data the school has about how well you are doing, you are not making the progress you ought to be making. The standards you reach in English, mathematics and science should be higher. There have been too many disruptions to your lessons because of staff absences and this has had an impact on your progress. Although recent actions have been taken to improve matters, and you are now making better progress, this is not fast enough to make sure you all achieve your best.

To help your headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors improve the school, I have asked them to:

- make sure all staff are more involved in checking how well things are going
- take actions to raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- make sure lessons are always interesting and of high quality.

As a result of this inspection, another inspector will visit the school each term to check on the progress the school is making.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to the inspection and I wish you every success as you move through school and into the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

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