

West Walker Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 108485 |
| Local Authority | Newcastle Upon Tyne |
| Inspection number | 337089 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | David Shearsmith |

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 | 204 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Ann Charlton |
| Headteacher | Mrs Nichola Draper |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work; looked at pupils' books; scrutinised case files for some vulnerable children; examined documents, including safeguarding records; and analysed 32 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

- standards in writing, particularly that of boys
- attendance of pupils
- attainment on entry – particularly weakness in language acquisition
- current performance of pupils through the school's tracking and assessment processes
- how well the curriculum serves the needs of all pupils with a focus on information and communication technology (ICT) and cross-curricular links to promote writing
- the impact of actions taken by leaders and managers to raise standards.

Information about the school

West Walker is a one-form entry primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. There are more pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than in similar-sized schools. The school has resourced provision for six pupils with behavioural difficulties. There are before- and after-school clubs that are managed by the governing body. The school has Artsmark Gold, Eco-Schools Gold, Foundation International Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

West Walker is a good and very welcoming school with strong leadership. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school with a commitment to raising standards as well as developing pupils' personal and social skills to equip them for their future lives. She is well supported by a strong leadership team with a high level of commitment to the school and its community. A close bond is forged with parents and carers and with children from the moment they first set foot through the door. This good partnership with parents and carers and the very good quality of working relationships in the school create a strong learning ethos. Pupils do well in this thriving community. They feel very safe and have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are happy at school and attendance rates are average and rising.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from low starting points. They get off to a really good start as a result of the good care, support and teaching that they receive. However, opportunities to challenge children in their learning outdoors are not fully taken and there is insufficient focus in on analysing data to guide self-evaluation and hence promote future developments. The quality of teaching in the main school is good and at times outstanding and, consequently, pupils progress well and their achievement is good. Their attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 in science is consistently above average and broadly average in English and mathematics. A well-coordinated, whole-school approach to literacy has resulted in girls making good progress in literacy lessons. The school acknowledges that for a minority of boys attainment in literacy is weaker than that of girls. This means that some boys do not gain a secure grasp of writing. The school has begun to address this and an improvement in the standards of most boys' writing is evident across the school but has yet to have an impact on results. Throughout the school the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with very complex difficulties, is good. This is as a result of good support by teaching assistants to raise standards.

Staff work hard and successfully provide interesting and exciting activities for pupils. This adds to pupils' enjoyment and is one reason why they speak so positively about their school. During the inspection there was a wide range of activities taking place which interested and engaged pupils. They enjoyed finding out things in classes where they were given opportunities to investigate for themselves. The school has recently enhanced the resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and these are being used well to promote pupils' learning in a range of contexts. The curriculum, both in and out of school, provides exciting and stimulating activities promoting learning that meet the needs of all pupils.

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The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It reacts quickly and effectively when shortcomings are identified in pupils' learning. Pupils' marked improvements in English generally exemplify that the school's capacity to improve is good. The school gives good value for money. It has clear plans for improvement that demonstrates its commitment to raising standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing for all boys by providing further opportunities for them to write in contexts that match their needs.
- Improve target setting for pupils so that targets are used consistently across the school.
- Ensure more rigorous analysis of data in the Early Years Foundation Stage to inform developments.
- Enhance opportunities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing more challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6. Achievement from very low starting points is good overall and there are no underachieving groups. There is a love of learning in the school. Pupils enjoy working practically in science and attain above average standards. In pupils' books the effectiveness of the drive to improve writing was clearly evident. Pupils write in a range of meaningful contexts, such as writing about a science experiment, and for a variety of audiences. The work in books showed a good progression in writing skills except for some boys whose standards are below expectations by the end of Year 6 compared with girls' standards.

Pupils speak with pride about their school and the support they receive from their teachers. Pupils demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning by the way that they settle well in lessons and are keen to volunteer their thoughts. As one pupil said, 'Teachers help you with your work and they care about us.' Behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding and this significantly contributes to the calm, orderly atmosphere around the whole school. Pupils say there are no instances of bullying. They know they can go to an adult if they need help. Attendance and punctuality have improved.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living as there is a good take-up for the healthy dinners and sporting activities. This is recognised by the award of Healthy Schools status. Pupils develop strong personal skills and learn to work collaboratively. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community through a wide range of activities and readily take responsibility to support the work of the school. ICT skills and numeracy skills are well developed. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being. They have strong sense of right and wrong as well as an understanding of other cultures, ensuring that their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good, overall, with some outstanding lessons where pupils made significant progress due to careful planning and a good use of assessment to promote learning. Learning objectives are explained clearly so pupils know what they have to learn. They respond well to opportunities to discuss with 'talk partners' and when working in groups. Good-quality questioning encourages pupils to think and make connections between different aspects of their learning. Teachers give careful attention to developing pupils' language skills in a variety of contexts.

The curriculum is imaginative and promotes pupils' ability to make meaningful links between subjects. For instance, Year 4 pupils were working on a project to examine a Roman body using research, reading, writing and thinking skills. Year 1 and 2 pupils also have a fun learning afternoon where they take part in a range of exciting creative activities which significantly enriches the curriculum. Opportunities are used in ICT to develop pupils' investigative skills and subject skills, such as interpreting graphs in mathematics. The school has a wide range of out-of-school learning opportunities which plays a significant role in enhancing learning for many pupils.

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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The promotion of pupils' personal development through the curriculum is very strong. All pupils are known exceptionally well as individuals by a number of different staff. Pupils spoke warmly of the way that staff help them feel safe and overcome any difficulties or concerns. There are good levels of support and care and every pupil is valued equally. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to support vulnerable children effectively. This good liaison with outside agencies ensures first-rate support for those with specific and complex needs. This means that these pupils can play their full part in the life of the school. Older pupils receive high-quality preparation for their move to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is supported well by members of an effective leadership team who work hard to improve standards. Good self-evaluation has enabled the school to improve important aspects of its work. In English there has been effective whole-school implementation of a range of strategies that has led to improved standards. These strategies include targeted support for reading and the development of writing skills through consistent development of these skills in different subjects of the curriculum. This is a good example of leaders at all levels embedding ambition, driving improvement and ensuring good value for money. The school is committed to treating all pupils equally.

The school meets the needs of pupils well and effectively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Community cohesion is good, there are strong links with the local community and global links are well developed. There is a developing link with a school in Birmingham to develop national links. Partnerships are extensive, including strong links with parents and carers, and these make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

Governors act effectively as a critical friend to the school and they ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled. Governors are well trained, proactive and know the school from first-hand experience. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective and particularly those relating to security. Governors have also extended the school's overall provision well through before- and after-school clubs that are well attended.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills at levels that are well below those expected for their age. When children enter Year 1 their skills are close to expected levels, although some children are still behind in number and calculations, and well behind in reading and writing. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a strong emphasis on developing the basic skills with focus sessions that promote learning through play and appropriate intervention by the teacher. Projects to promote literacy skills are having a positive impact on children's learning and children's skills are improving. Progress is good, particularly in personal, social, emotional and physical development. This is because of the good provision, including the well-resourced accommodation, and the caring attitude of all staff.

Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. Opportunities for outdoor learning, however, do not sufficiently challenge children and, consequently, learning opportunities are missed. Children respond enthusiastically to the well-planned learning experiences and rapidly grow in confidence. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and they are appreciative of this support for their children. Enthusiastic leadership and management have created a good sense of teamwork and consistency of approach, as well as good procedures to help children settle into school swiftly. There is, however, an insufficient focus on analysing data to inform self-evaluation and promote future developments.

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

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 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers hold very positive views about the school. In particular, they praise the quality of leadership and management and the way in which staff cater for their children's individual needs. There were no significant issues raised by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Walker 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 20 | 63 | 11 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 24 | 75 | 8 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 17 | 53 | 14 | 44 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 18 | 56 | 13 | 41 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 19 | 59 | 10 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 19 | 59 | 12 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 66 | 10 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 16 | 50 | 15 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 18 | 56 | 12 | 38 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 15 | 47 | 12 | 38 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 14 | 44 | 13 | 41 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 17 | 53 | 13 | 41 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 18 | 56 | 13 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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.



23 November 2009

Inspection of West Walker Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 3XW

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the very warm friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we visited your school. You told us that yours is a good school and we agree.

These are the things that we liked most about your school.

- Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You behave and learn extremely well, and yours is a very happy school.
- You receive good teaching and do well in your work.
- I staff work very well with your parents and carers.
- Teachers give you interesting things to do.
- Your school is very well led.

Your school is always trying to do better. We have asked the school to look at four ways in which the school could be improved. These are the things we have asked them to do.

- Help all boys to do even better with their writing.
- Make sure that you use your literacy and numeracy targets to improve your learning.
- Improve outdoor learning for younger children.
- Use information about learning for younger children to make improvements.

We wish you every success in the future and know you will continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Shearsmith

Lead Inspector

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