

# The Weatheralls Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110769
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337566
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Williams

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	464
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chrissy Barclay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Pratt Street Soham Cambridgeshire
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<b>Email address</b>	office@weatheralls.cambs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and those relating to their health, safety and attendance and 87 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the school's evidence of pupils' progress and the impact of work to improve boy's writing and girls' performance in mathematics
- how well the school provides for its most able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well pupils respond to the school's potentially strong promotion of their personal development
- how well the school's evaluates its work so that it has an accurate view of teaching and its overall effectiveness.

## Information about the school

Most pupils at this large primary school are from White British backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen in recent years and is just above the national average. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school in the Nursery. The headteacher was appointed in April 2008 and four teachers joined the school at the beginning of term. Amongst a number of nationally recognised awards, the school has Healthy Schools status. The school hosts a privately run after-school club. This is inspected separately.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The Weatheralls Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. After a period when the school's performance in the national tests for eleven year olds declined, senior leaders and staff have successfully raised standards. A combination of this good leadership, satisfactory teaching and a well-planned curriculum ensure that pupils now make the progress expected of them, and an increasing proportion are making good progress. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. This is reflected in the provisional results for 2009 and in the work of current pupils, and is a considerable improvement on the results of the previous year.

The leaders' success in halting the decline and raising pupils' attainment shows they have good capacity to secure further improvement. There are many reasons for this success. Key amongst them has been a concerted effort to improve teaching and learning. Leaders keep a close check on the quality of work in books and lessons and they have an accurate and astute picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They work with staff to identify and tackle areas for improvement and they track pupils' progress carefully, so that those at risk of underachieving can receive a boost.

As a result of this work, pupils' progress is accelerating, but inconsistencies remain and recent staff changes mean that improving teaching and learning remains a key priority. In less effective lessons, pupils spend too long listening to instructions and explanations, which limits the time available for them to try things for themselves. In most lessons, pupils' with special educational needs are supported well, which enables them to make the progress expected of them. In the best lessons, staff who support pupils of other abilities make a strong contribution to their learning. In some cases, this additional support is not fully utilised at the start of lessons, particularly to help those pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers plan for pupils of different abilities, but it is not always sufficiently clear how more able pupils will be challenged to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

Most pupils enjoy school, because they feel safe and able to learn. Most parents are positive, too, although a small minority feel that the school takes insufficient account of their views. The school recognises the need to explore ways of engaging with these parents, and plans are in hand. The school functions as a cohesive community and pupils are well involved in local community events. Links are being established with groups and organisations further afield, but pupils' understanding of the range of communities found nationally and internationally is limited.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to secure consistently good progress and raise standards by:
  - ensuring that all lessons are briskly paced
  - providing a clear and consistent challenge for more able pupils
  - sharing good practice in the deployment of classroom support staff.
- Work with parents to ensure that all feel their views are taken into account.
  - Extend pupils' understanding of communities beyond the local area.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. They make good progress in reading, and the school's comprehensive records show that the proportion of pupils making good progress in other subjects is increasing. As a result, pupils' attainment rose in 2009 to broadly average levels, following in a dip in 2007 and 2008. Inspectors looked closely at the impact of the school's work, particularly efforts to improve the performance of girls in mathematics and to raise boys' attainment in writing. In both cases, pupils' work in books and lessons, records of their progress and the most recent national assessments show that there has been marked success. Consequently, the gap between boys' reading and writing has narrowed and girls' results in mathematics in 2009 were the best for some time. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to maintain average levels.

In lessons across the school, pupils make good progress where the teaching is good. Here, teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and how their success will be judged. In these lessons, pupils of different abilities learn well because the work is well matched to their needs. This is not always the case, so that for example, the progress of more able pupils slows when they are insufficiently challenged. Pupils' learning is often most brisk when they take part in practical activities that capture their enthusiasm, for example when measuring parts of the body in science or devising rules for ball games in physical education. The school tracks the progress of individuals and groups of pupils carefully; all groups, including those identified as gifted or talented, and potentially vulnerable pupils, achieve satisfactorily and their progress is accelerating. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because they are well supported and, in some instances, they make very good progress. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology and many attain levels above those expected. This, coupled with their sound progress in other basic skills, means they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is strong and successful. As a result, they make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance levels are average and pupils say they enjoy school. As one pupil wrote, 'It's a really nice place to be.' Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers, concentrate well

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and work hard to improve. They behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives, and this is supported well by the award of Healthy School status and the popularity of opportunities for sport and exercise. They contribute well to the school community by joining the effective school council and taking on a range of other responsibilities, such as playground buddies, that help the school's smooth running. Beyond the school, there are improved links with a range of local organisations and pupils make a good contribution to events and initiatives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships, good behaviour and secure subject knowledge are strong features of most of the lessons seen during the inspection. In most cases, lessons run smoothly so that teachers can concentrate on helping pupils to learn without distraction. The few pupils who present challenging behaviour are usually well managed, which limits the disruption to their learning and that of other pupils, and teaching assistants make a good contribution here, and in the support they provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The support is less successful where teaching

<sup>1</sup> 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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assistants do not have a clear role during whole class sessions at the beginning of lessons. This is particularly the case for those pupils who find learning difficult who, without intervention, sometimes struggle to keep pace. Teachers' expectations are usually appropriately high but, their planning often lacks precise information about how more able pupils will be stretched. Across the school, teachers question well, keep a close check on pupils' understanding and deal sensitively with any misconceptions. They mark pupils' work regularly and give clear suggestions for how they should improve.

Staff have worked successfully to provide a broad and interesting curriculum. Improved planning in literacy and numeracy is helping to raise standards. Good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education contributes to their good personal development. This is further enhanced by a good range of activities to enrich pupils' experience in and out of lessons, including regular residential visits. Clubs and activities are popular and well attended. Strong links are made between subjects so that, for example, pupils use their literacy skills to extend their learning in history. The school is rightly proud of the broad range of activities it provides in information and communication technology.

Good care, guidance and support contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. This is supported by parents, the vast majority of whom report that the school keeps their children safe. The school monitors pupils' health and safety thoroughly and assesses the risk of activities conscientiously. Procedures to protect children are robust and every step is taken to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need. Close partnerships with outside agencies contribute to this process and to the good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are well thought-out systems to prepare pupils for their move to secondary education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school is successfully raising pupils' attainment. Senior leaders and staff share the determination to improve the quality of teaching. They evaluate the school's work robustly and have an accurate understanding of what needs to improve and how to achieve it. This has been a significant factor in the school's improvement in the last year. The recent high turnover of staff has presented a new challenge, particularly in the pursuit of consistently good teaching. Nevertheless, new staff have settled in well, and those new to teaching are receiving the good support

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they need as they start their careers. Governors are supportive. They have received training in the evaluation of test and other data that is increasing their involvement in self-evaluation and their understanding of the school's performance.

Senior staff track the progress and welfare of different groups of pupils carefully and they ensure that all groups, including vulnerable pupils, enjoy the same opportunities. Instances of bullying or harassment are rare and are dealt with effectively. Rigorous steps are taken to check on the suitability of adults to work with children. Leaders have a good understanding of the impact of their work to promote community cohesion in the school and local area. This is less well developed further afield.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception. Staff provide an interesting, well-equipped and welcoming environment and good relationships with parents enable children to settle in quickly. Many children start school with skills that are lower than those expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They enjoy their learning, make good progress and most reach the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. Staff are skilled at promoting positive attitudes to learning and high quality planning ensures that children of all abilities are suitably challenged. Careful records are kept of their progress. Children behave well and relationships with the adults and amongst children themselves are extremely positive. Good leadership ensures that children's welfare needs are met and the leader provides an excellent example for other staff to follow. All aspects of the provision are evaluated carefully; areas for



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improvement are identified and tackled systematically. Very good use is already made of the 'inspiration station', a newly acquired extension to outdoor facilities, and this is promoting children's physical and social development well.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Most parents are positive about their children's experience in school and the progress they make. They feel strongly that their children enjoy school and are kept safe, and inspectors agree. A quarter of those who responded indicated that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that, while a few pupils present challenging behaviour, this is generally managed well by staff. While most parents feel that the school takes account of their views and is well led and managed, a few do not agree. This is also reflected in written comments received from parents. The school recognises that there is scope to explore ways of improving these views and plans are in hand. Inspectors agree that this is an important priority.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Weatheralls 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 464 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	49	41	47	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	52	39	45	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	28	52	60	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	28	50	57	11	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	41	44	51	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	36	49	56	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	30	55	63	4	5	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)	34	39	43	49	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	28	52	60	7	8	4	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	21	44	51	17	20	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	17	59	68	10	11	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	16	18	54	62	10	11	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	33	51	59	6	7	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



30 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Weatheralls Primary School, Soham, CB7 5BH

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with us or filled in questionnaires. You gave us lots of helpful information. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things it does well and some things it could do better. Your headteacher and the other staff have been working hard to improve the school and things are getting better. Lots of you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe, and the way the school takes care of you is one of its strengths. When we visited your classrooms we could see how hard you work and we were impressed by your behaviour. Well done, and please keep it up. You will learn well if you listen carefully. One of the reasons you enjoy school is because the staff provide interesting things for you to do in and out of lessons. We are pleased you know about healthy eating and taking regular exercise. The school council do a good job by coming up with ideas for things that can be improved.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on three areas.

- we want them to make sure that more lessons are good ones, so that you learn well.
- most of your parents think that the school does a good job, but a few of them would like the school to listen more to their views. We want the staff to work with your parents to do this.
- the school teaches you about your local community. We want your staff to check carefully that they also help you to understand how different communities get along in Britain and around the world.

We know you will want to help by continuing to work hard, behave well and enjoy school. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Keith Williams

Lead inspector

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