

Walverden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119178
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339374
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Berry
Headteacher	Miss M Thacker
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons. All classes were visited and all full-time teachers observed. Over half the time available was spent looking at pupils' learning. The inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils, parents, the School Improvement Partner and a local authority adviser for the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents and policies relating to safeguarding, school policies and the records for the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised 116 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers. In addition, they looked at responses to the pupils' and staff surveys carried out for this inspection.

- how effectively the school is addressing the low attainment and apparent decline at Key Stage 2 in 2009
- how well pupils with English as an additional language progress in their language development and their work more generally
- the quality of teaching and how well the teachers plan work to meet the different abilities and needs of pupils
- how effectively the school's strategies promote good attendance and behaviour and why
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in raising achievement.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. There is an above average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils joining the school throughout the school year is higher than in most schools. The school has the Healthy Schools status and the Leading Parent Partnership award. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff into senior management positions. Currently, there is an acting deputy headteacher and two acting assistant headteachers.

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

3

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 significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to attainment and achievement in English and mathematics and in pupils' attendance.

Children start in the Nursery with skills which are well below those expected for their age. Attainment in the Year 6 national tests in English and mathematics is consistently low and there has been a downward trend in the last three years. In 2009 only half the pupils gained the expected levels for their age in both English and mathematics. There are some improvements in pupils' progress as seen in the lessons observed, but progress throughout the school although now satisfactory continues to be uneven and has yet to impact sufficiently on raising standards. It accelerates in Year 6 in response to good, focused teaching. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Although there are examples of good practice throughout the school, teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to accelerate and secure progress in order to make up for the legacy of low attainment. Pupils' achievement is therefore inadequate. Teachers give clear explanations, manage their classes well and create atmospheres conducive to effective learning. Pupils respond with good behaviour. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching; this includes too many missed opportunities for pupils to speak or participate actively during lessons. Teachers vary in their ability to plan work to meet pupils' different needs and in the quality of feedback to pupils. There is also insufficient use of targets for individual pupils, particularly in mathematics. This is counter productive to helping pupils to learn how they might improve further.

This is a caring, harmonious school. Good levels of care mean that some outcomes in relation to pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and to the wider community. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts but the school does not receive the full cooperation of all parents in ensuring their children's attendance is good. The school has strengthened its procedures and although attendance has improved it is still below average.

The interim, senior management team is stretched to meet all its challenges but is doing so satisfactorily. There is sound monitoring of the quality of teaching, which is improving as a result. However, not enough attention is paid to evaluating pupils' progress in lesson observations. The school has been effective in improving pupils' behaviour and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, there is not always enough

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guidance or support structures in place, to ensure children benefit as well as they might from independent play activities in the Nursery as well as in Reception. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics and ensure more consistently good progress by:
 - - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - - giving pupils feedback on how they might improve further
 - - using targets for individual pupils in mathematics
 - - encouraging pupils to participate more actively in lessons, particularly by providing more opportunities for them to speak
 - - providing more structure and guidance for activities where children learn through independent play in the Nursery and Reception
 - - strengthening the focus on pupils' progress when managers observe lessons.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - - communicating to parents and carers the importance of good attendance
 - - intensifying efforts with the parents and carers whose children are persistently absent.

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

Pupils enjoy lessons and say that teachers make the work interesting and fun. They particularly relish opportunities to be actively involved. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils responded enthusiastically to opportunities to discuss in pairs how to write clear instructions for the set task. In other classes opportunities to involve them more fully were missed and pupils were too passive. Pupils regularly practise their mental mathematics but this reveals that many have weak numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive extra support but opportunities for them to learn through practical activities are missed. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers once they have reached reasonable fluency in speaking and reading English. The persistently low attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, coupled with progress that is no better than satisfactory, means that pupils' achievement is inadequate overall, and therefore outcomes for pupils are also unsatisfactory.

Pupils are happy at school. They have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. This is demonstrated by the award of Healthy School status. The school council members say that their views are valued. They have contributed to identifying equipment for the playground and in recycling schemes. New pupils to the school are made to feel very welcome. Those with little or no spoken English on arrival are helped to settle by other pupils acting as interpreters. Pupils show mutual respect for one another and contribute well to fundraising to help others, including a local charity. Pupils' weak basic skills and low attendance means that their economic well-being is

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inadequate.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving and no inadequate teaching was seen. There is now a balance of good and satisfactory teaching but it is not consistently good enough to ensure pupils' progress is even across the school. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6, there was a buzz of excitement as pupils investigated the effects of air resistance on different falling objects. Pupils were able to make simple hypotheses and to explain well how the fall of objects could be accelerated or slowed down. There is a high proportion of new teachers who bring a vitality to the classroom. Relationships and pupils' behaviour are positive features of most lessons. However, not all teachers are using assessment data effectively to plan work to match pupils' abilities. Consequently, the work is sometimes too easy for some of the more-able pupils and their progress is slowed down. Marking is conscientiously carried out. There is constructive feedback on how pupils can improve their writing, including the use of targets, but the practice is not embedded in other subjects.

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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Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and contributes significantly to their positive personal development. The school has taken action to adapt the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. It has recently re-organised pupils in Years 2 and 6 into ability groups for the teaching of numeracy and literacy. It is too soon, however, to judge the impact of these measures on attainment. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities and make effective use of computers.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is organised well. As a result, they make good progress in their social development. The family support officer is highly effective in ensuring that the support for potentially vulnerable pupils meets their needs. The school works hard to try to improve the levels of attendance. Although the newly appointed attendance officer has had a significant impact on reducing the level of absence of targeted pupils, the overall level of attendance for pupils in the school is still below average. The taking of extended holidays is a major, contributory factor to the above average level of absence from school. In their effort to tackle persistent absence and improve attendance further, the school is developing its work with parents and carers and establishing additional links with a new local authority educational welfare officer.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Initiatives in the school have been hindered by the difficulties in appointing a deputy headteacher. The governing body has taken the bold step of appointing relatively inexperienced staff who demonstrate good potential. This strategy is bearing fruit. The local authority is providing valued support because of the situation. There is a shared sense of purpose amongst staff and the leadership team has brought about improvement in the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. New coordinators for literacy and numeracy are beginning to have an impact. The improvements demonstrate the capacity for the school to improve, but they are still too recent to have had the required impact of raising standards. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It is an inclusive school but recognises that the rate of progress for different groups of pupils needs to be accelerated. An improved and comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress is being implemented and pupils' underperformance is being detected and

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remedied earlier than in previous years. The school promotes community cohesion well overall. A considerable strength of the school is its outstanding promotion of community cohesion locally and plans are now in hand to further extend its global links. The school takes the lead in an area project that regularly brings together pupils from different cultures and backgrounds. This also involves parents and carers and there is a good working partnership. This is reflected by the recent award of the Leading Parent Partnership award. The school has satisfactory safeguarding procedures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Many join with little or no English and receive good support from bilingual assistants. There is an appropriate emphasis on promoting their language and literacy skills. Children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage but for many, their skills remain well below expected levels when they enter Year 1. There is an appropriate balance of teacher-led activities and those where the aim is that children learn through independent play. These play activities, however, are not sufficiently well planned to ensure that children use the equipment well enough to learn and develop as much as they should. In guided sessions, adults support children's learning effectively, particularly in speaking and listening. A newly appointed leader is giving clear direction for this phase. She has introduced a number of initiatives which are appropriately derived from a rigorous evaluation of data. Resources have been purchased to provide more stimulating activities. In particular, the outdoor play area has

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been completely revamped and provides more opportunities for children's development. The school plans other improvements, including using assessment data to improve continuity of learning of children when they move from the Nursery to the Reception class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one parent wrote, 'Relationships with parents and the community alike are excellent. My thanks to all.' There was no pattern to the few concerns identified by individual parents or carers. These were all raised with the headteacher by the inspectors and satisfactory responses received.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walverden 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 440 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	46	60	51	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	53	53	45	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	49	57	49	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	40	65	56	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	53	45	61	52	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	40	62	53	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	47	59	50	1	1	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)	47	40	61	52	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	39	63	54	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	40	57	49	7	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	37	64	55	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	45	38	65	56	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	50	56	48	2	2	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 Walverden Primary School, Nelson, BB9 0TL

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You told us that you enjoy school, the teachers make work interesting and you feel safe there. Your school council members represent you well. They explained to us how their views are valued. The things that we judged to be particularly positive are that:

- you behave well
- you all get on well together and yours is a happy school
- the links that Walverden has with the local community are excellent
- the adults look after you very well
- there are many things for you to do
- there are good links between the school and your parents and carers.

The quality of teaching is helping you make satisfactory progress in your learning. However the standards you are reaching in English and mathematics needs to be higher. We have agreed some ways in which the teachers can help you to make faster progress. Also, some pupils do not attend as often as they should. This is often because of extended holidays. As you are not learning when you miss school, it is important that you attend as often as you can. Because these areas need to be stronger we have judged that the school is not yet effective enough, and so we have given it a notice to improve. This means that the school has to take action to improve these areas quickly. Inspectors will return to the school to check that the improvements take place.

Yours sincerely

Mr Barry Jones

Lead Inspector

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