

West Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124072
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340486
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

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	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Parkes
Headteacher	Shaun Miles
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons and 12 teaching staff. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and spoke to parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including: the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from 52 parents and carers and those from staff.

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

- the progress made by different groups of pupils and how consistent this is across the school
- the consistency of teaching and learning across the school and how this contributes to the achievement of the pupils
- how the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures they settle well and make good progress.

Information about the school

West Hill is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion known to be entitled to free school meals. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status, the Eco School Status Award, Active Mark and Sportsmark award, 'Sing Up' gold award and Inclusion Quality Mark.

'Sallywags' is an on-site playgroup, managed by a private provider and so 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

3

Main findings

West Hill Primary is a satisfactory school. It has many good features. Pupils are helped to develop good personal and social skills and as a result they behave well, care for each other and enjoy their time in school. 'We are really impressed with West Hill' is representative of positive comments made by parents and carers. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and talk about the range of activities that they enjoy and are involved in '....lots of clubs and trips and instrumental lessons' and comment that 'behaviour is great'. All pupils receive good care. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported for because of targeted planning, positive intervention and links with a range of agencies that aid the development of these pupils. Parents and carers are positive about the all round help provided for the child and the family. As one said: '....they supported us... and understand....'.

There is strong leadership from the head teacher, who is the driving force for change. Leaders at other levels are relatively new to their posts and so are still developing their understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas to develop. School self-evaluation is satisfactory, but too dependant on the headteacher. There has been a steady improvement since the last inspection and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Standards have been steadily rising in mathematics and in girls' English, though boys now have ground to make up particularly in writing longer pieces of work. In science, pupils are better at knowing and understanding facts than they are in their investigation and enquiry skills.

Children have a secure start to school through good induction procedures. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 is less consistent and although it accelerates in Years 5 and 6 pupils leave school with broadly average attainment and no more than satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 2. Teaching throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory with some good features. Where it is good pupils are actively involved, tasks are well matched to their abilities and they are able to use previous learning to support their current learning. Where it is satisfactory teachers work hard, but do not ensure that pupils also work hard throughout the lesson as too much time is spent listening to their teacher, tasks are not always appropriately challenging and questioning does not always probe pupils' understanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in core subjects with a particular focus on:
 - developing skills in English, particularly of boys, by providing more

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opportunities for extended writing

- improving scientific enquiry skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by ensuring that:
 - tasks are always accurately matched to pupils' learning needs
 - the pace of learning is sufficiently brisk and teachers do not talk for too long
 - questioning is used effectively to probe pupils' understanding and so extend their learning.
- Develop the role of the senior leadership team and subject leaders so that they play a bigger part in school improvement.
- 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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Achievement is satisfactory but systems in place are not yet thorough enough to ensure that progress is consistently good. Pace of learning in lessons varies between classes. Most groups of pupils make similar progress but boys' progress is not as good as that of girls. Pupils enjoy lessons, and demonstrate good respect for each other's views. They persevere with tasks, and respond well when given the opportunity to show what they can do with challenging work. When they have to sit for too long listening they sometimes lose concentration, but behaviour remains good. At the moment, there is limited involvement of pupils in planning their own learning and chances to reflect on and evaluate learning are not consistent between classes.

Pupils enjoy being at school and they speak enthusiastically about a range of opportunities they have to develop their skills, particularly in music and sport. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including e-safety. They know that adults in the school will help them if they have concerns and they value the help they receive from each other through such systems as 'playground buddies'.

The Healthy School Status reflects the pupils' good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils choose to take part in the many sporting activities and to eat healthily. Year 6 pupils lead 'huff and puff' activities for Key Stage 1 pupils and the democratically elected school council take a lead in resourcing healthy lifestyle activities. The Eco Council take a lead in developing awareness of environmental issues through monitoring energy use, recycling, making compost and helping the school gain the Eco School Green Flag award. The school has a high profile in the wider community through performances by its choir and instrumental groups, particularly the steel pans. The skilled, tuneful singing in the school is reflected in the 'Sing Up' gold award. Pupils also participate in and succeed in a range of sporting events in the community. They understand about the needs of the wider community through their involvement in charity fund raising. Pupils receive good help to understand their feelings and emotions

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and reflect on these well in assembly and circle times. Pupils are effectively broadening their understanding of different cultures through shared experiences with a school in a different locality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, plan carefully what they want pupils to learn and explain the tasks carefully. As a result most pupils are usually confident about tackling their work. Older pupils know their targets and are able to assess how well they have done in reaching these. There is some good teaching, but where it is weaker the pace slows; pupils are not actively involved in their learning and the wide range of learning needs in each class is not always precisely addressed. As a result, some pupils are not able to immediately tackle the tasks they are given and others insufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, especially supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and this is reflected in the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Although provision for different abilities is not always followed through in lessons, the

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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wider curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for enrichment including challenging material for the most-able. For example, effective links with local high schools enable higher ability pupils to receive weekly mathematics lessons from Key Stage 3 staff and fortnightly extension lessons in French. There is strength in the arts, particularly music. Participation in the wide range of music activities provides excellent opportunities for the development of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils learn to appreciate a range of musical styles and enjoy performing to a high standard. Themed weeks and curriculum days give a lively dimension to children's learning. French is taught throughout the school and older pupils enjoy their visits to France. The Active Sports Mark recognises the good provision for sport in the school. Pupils are confident about transition processes, in school and as they move on.

The school has very good procedures to improve attendance and can point to examples of improved attendance, but not all parents and carers ensure the good attendance of their child. Careful planning, good support and work with a range of agencies to address the needs of pupils who are vulnerable enables them to overcome significant barriers and participate in all the school offers.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development. He communicates this clearly, so that staff share a common commitment to school improvement. There has been a steady acceleration in pupils' progress since the last inspection, with the most notable improvement being in mathematics. However, too much responsibility currently rests on the head teacher for monitoring, evaluation and school improvement. The senior leadership team and subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are all relatively new in their roles. While they have made a sound start, their contribution to strategic management and school improvement is understandably still limited. The head teacher regularly observes lessons and provides staff with feedback to improve their performance. Areas for improvement are identified clearly, but these are not always tackled with sufficient precision.

Governors are well-organised, committed and supportive, but they do not always give sufficient challenge to the school, particularly to ensure that the evaluation of performance is rigorous at all levels. Safeguarding procedures are in place and regulations met, with two governors well trained and safeguarding a regular agenda

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item at meetings. There is good provision in place to promote community cohesion, locally, nationally and internationally. For example, pupils understand and respect the richness and diversity of the culture of the United Kingdom and benefit from links with a school with a high ethnic mix in this country. The school is well aware of the groups of pupils it serves. There is no discrimination and there are some good support systems. However, variations in progress between gender groups have not yet been addressed. The school has good partnerships with parents and carers. Regular communication through newsletters keeps them informed about curriculum developments. Parents' views are regularly sought and any areas of concern tackled as appropriate.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skill levels that are below those expected for their age and sometimes well below. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning and enter Key Stage 1 with broadly average attainment. Thorough induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly. Parents and carers are welcome and involved in the start to the day in Nursery as children change their reading books and share their home activities in the home/nursery diary. A representative comment from a parent told how their child 'loves it'. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes have a very good understanding of young children's needs and how they learn. There is a wide range of activities both inside and outside for both groups and a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. Good open questioning develops children's thinking. On-going assessments help staff plan for further learning

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and respond to children's interests. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There has been good progress since the previous inspection and a clear identification of the next steps to improve the provision further. These rightly include developing a greater understanding of assessment data to further inform planning. There are excellent links with the on-site playgroup.

Children work and play well together. They are enthusiastic in their learning and keen to experiment with new experiences. Nursery children learn to control the Bee-Bot so that it moves around the grid, children in Reception enthusiastically learn how to tell the story of the Three Little Pigs in French. Children are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle with fruit and vegetables for snacks, regular PE and plenty of opportunity to run and play outside. They are kept safe and helped to understand how to be safe through teaching about fire and road safety. They contribute to the class planning as they discuss such issues as what they would like the role play corner to be. The building faces the main school buildings and children use the main school site and this helps children gain confidence about their move to Year 1.

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 are supportive of the school. The returned questionnaires were mainly positive. A few comments identified areas of concern, such as the way behaviour is managed and the school taking note of parent and carer concerns. Inspection evidence shows that the school has very effective strategies for ensuring the good behaviour of all pupils and that parents and carers have good opportunities to speak to staff and express their views through questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Hill 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 267 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	65	16	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	81	8	15	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	58	20	38	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	60	20	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	65	18	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	46	24	46	4	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	40	30	58	1	2	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)	23	44	21	40	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	54	23	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	44	25	48	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	42	25	48	5	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	58	19	37	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	63	15	29	2	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Hill Primary School, Cannock, WS12 4BH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We enjoyed seeing your lessons, joining in assembly, talking to you and listening to the steel pans and the choir. Your school is satisfactory, but has some good things about it.

You behave well, look after each other and say how much you enjoy school and all the exciting things you are able to do, especially the music and sport.

All the adults in the school care about you and make sure that you are safe.

You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

The adults who run your school work hard to make sure you have opportunities to understand about feelings and emotions and how to handle them.

The things listed below are what we have asked your school to do to make it better and help you to make good progress.

Make English standards higher, especially for boys, by giving you more opportunities to write longer pieces. Also raise standards in science by ensuring you can plan your own investigations.

Make sure that all your teachers plan work that will challenge every one of you, and that you work as hard as your teachers do.

All the leaders in the school should make sure they know how well you are doing and quickly make any improvements that are necessary.

You can help by making sure you work hard in every lesson and that you know what to do in all your tasks.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen

Lead inspector

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