

# West Minster Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118438
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	343836
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Simmons

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>	332
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Duncan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Bayford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2010
<b>School address</b>	St Georges Avenue Sheerness Isle of Sheppy ME12 1ET
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included seeing almost all teachers teach as part of the 15 lessons/part lessons observed. They looked at examples of pupils work and evaluated their progress. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the chair of the federation governing body. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, which included such things as the schools improvement planning and leaders records about the quality of the lessons. In total, 39 parental questionnaires were analysed. Staff and pupils questionnaires were evaluated.

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

how well leaders are driving forward developments, so that pupils achievement and learning are at least satisfactory and attainment is rising

how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve

how teaching, learning and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection

the start made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that they have the basics to do well in the next stage of their education

the effectiveness of the federation governing body.

## Information about the school

West Minster is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school is part of a hard federation, which formed in May 2006. This means that West Minster Primary School and its partner school, Rose Street Primary School, form the Sheerness West Federation, which has one federation governing body. Rose Street was inspected at the same time as West Minster but has a separate report. The executive headteacher is responsible for both schools overall. He has been leading West Minster since January 2010 due to the resignation of the previous head of school. Five new staff have joined the school since January 2010. A new head of school will be joining West Minster in September 2010 and this will again free the executive headteacher to share his time equally between West Minster and Rose Street. At the time of the last inspection, West Minster was moving from a first school (taking pupils only to Year 4) to becoming a full primary school. This is the first year when the school has had Year 6 pupils.

West Minster is a lead school in the local area for provision for pupils with physical impairment. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is more than double the national average. Pupils particular needs mostly relate to communication, behaviour and moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of a Nursery and Reception class. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is much higher than average.

**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 Minster was given a notice to improve at the time of the previous inspection in May 2009 as achievement, attainment, teaching and assessment were not good enough. In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is a direct result of the committed leadership of the executive headteacher and the helpful support of all staff and the federation governing body. The school's ethos has changed. In particular, expectations have been raised and pupils' progress is accelerating quickly. Staff show a greater sense of team spirit and professional reflection to develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils.

The leadership team demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve at this time. The school's improvement planning identifies key priorities and self-evaluation is accurate. The impact of leaders' work is becoming evident in the improving achievement of pupils and in better teaching, learning and assessment, so that these features are now satisfactory. As the school is currently without a substantive head of school, the delegation of leadership and management responsibilities is constrained. Much of the monitoring of lessons and the tracking of pupils' progress are carried out by the executive headteacher. Whilst good work goes into arranging the interventions and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, too little time is available for middle managers to be more fully involved in evaluating the impact of their work for this group.

Pupils' attainment, throughout the whole school, has risen steadily since the school was given notice to improve in May 2009. Year 6 pupils are on track to reach expected levels of attainment in reading, but in mathematics and writing, attainment is likely to be lower than age-related expectations. Pupils' attainment in the rest of the school is rising well and quickly. Low attainment in the current Year 6 is due to the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and because this year group had experienced some inadequate teaching in the past, which left a legacy of low attainment that has been difficult to rectify quickly.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Leaders are now ambitious and work is underway to improve the planning of both teaching and learning. However, there is more to do, particularly in improving the teaching of mathematics and writing, and increasing the pace and challenge for some groups of pupils in some lessons. Attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the end of Year 2 has improved. This means that, despite children's often very low attainment on entry to the school, a better base is being laid for pupils to develop at least average skill levels as they

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progress through the school.

Pupils benefit from being in a happy school where the quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils respect each other, behave well, feel safe and are proud of their school. The work of the family liaison officer and the care given to highly vulnerable pupils are outstanding as are the arrangements for secondary school transfer.

Attendance by the youngest children is too low.

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

- Raise the overall quality of teaching and learning to good, by July 2011, in order to lift attainment and achievement by:
  - improving the teaching of mathematics throughout the school so that pupils make faster and more consistent progress in all year groups and girls are helped to enjoy mathematics more
  - making sure that, in writing, all pupils know their targets and are given more help to edit and improve their work, especially the most able pupils
  - making sure that marking gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work and time to act on teachers comments
  - speeding up the pace of lessons, especially by ensuring that pupils do not sit on the carpet too long listening to teachers
  - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with wider opportunities for outside learning and greater overall challenge in activities, especially for the most able children.
- Work closely with parents to raise attendance, especially for children in the youngest classes.
- Strengthen leadership by:
  - the executive headteacher sharing and delegating responsibilities more to senior and middle leaders when the new head of school joins the team
  - making sure that monitoring focuses precisely on the key priorities for improving teaching and learning
  - providing more time for the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Early Years Action W3
- The gate to the kitchen area in the Nursery must be repaired so that this area is made inaccessible to children, unless accompanied by an adult.
- 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**

Children enjoy learning and are keen to improve. They like their teachers and the

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activities provided for them; this motivates them to try hard and concentrate. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and this has the greatest impact on helping them to behave well and grow in confidence and self-esteem. This group generally makes satisfactory progress in learning new skills. Some pupils with very complex needs, who receive intensive one-to-one support, make good progress.

The impact of initiatives to improve pupils achievement in reading and writing was evident in the lessons seen. Pupils show enthusiasm, confidence and success in reading and writing for different purposes. Teaching which is developing pupils skills in using letters and sounds effectively is aiding this. Attainment in reading shows a marked improvement and this is especially evident in the improving level of skills for the most able pupils. Leaders recognise that the most able pupils could still be doing better in writing. In Year 6 lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to think of imaginative ideas for an alternative version of the story of The Enormous Crocodile. Pupils were working hard to use speech marks, use interesting vocabulary and correct sentence structures. There were however missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils further. Despite this, learning was purposeful and focused. It also enabled pupils to use information and communication technology to illustrate their books. Helping pupils to develop their speaking skills is high profile in the school, as was seen in a Year 2 lesson when pupils keenly used adjectives to describe hidden objects in a touch and feel bag. In mathematics, work is not always suitably pitched for pupils different abilities and marking is not guiding pupils clearly enough in how to improve.

As a result of the federation, the school can afford to employ specialist teachers for sports and music. This has a positive impact on pupils fitness, singing and music-making skills. Sport and music make a positive contribution to the community life of the school. Whilst pupils know the basics of eating healthily, they comment that they often do not have enough to eat when having school lunches. The headteacher has taken this up with the catering company to promote healthy eating, especially considering the very high proportion of pupils who have free school meals.

Attendance is much lower than average, but levels improve as pupils move through the school. Higher rates of attendance are hampered by the very complex medical needs and low attendance by some younger children.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Within the federation, the school has had a full review of the curriculum, so that both schools share similar approaches, especially in topic work. Teachers plan their lessons so that learning builds up from one day to the next. The school provides a wide variety of clubs and visits to enrich pupils knowledge and enjoyment of school. Teaching is satisfactory. Only half the lessons seen during the inspection were good. There is too much variation in the quality of planning and sometimes too little challenge for the most able pupils. The pace of teaching in some lessons dips and adversely affects learning, for example when pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to teachers explain what they have to do, rather than getting on with their individual and group practical learning activities. The roles of teaching assistants are not consistently clear. Teachers give pupils interesting things to do in lessons and they encourage them to learn in different ways. This was evident in a good science lesson, when pupils enjoyed thinking hard and sharing their ideas about irreversible and reversible actions. Teachers talk to pupils about how to improve their work. Pupils have targets, although they are not always clear about what these are. Leaders are fully aware that the quality of marking of pupils work is inconsistent and an area for improvement.

The staff work hard to make strong links with outside agencies to ensure that pupils individual special educational needs are met. The care of very vulnerable pupils is aided by superb learning journey assessment books. The school has put rigorous procedures in place to help lift attendance rates but it is a real challenge for the school; staff correctly remain focused on this. Pupils academic progress is discussed carefully. If pupils are not making the progress expected, effective support programmes are put into

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place to enable pupils to make faster progress.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher has empowered staff to take greater responsibility for the progress and attainment of the children in their classes. He, with other senior staff, has shown clear vision and drive to improve teaching and learning. The schools improvement partner has given effective help to the school. Senior leaders work well together and there is a satisfactory partnership with others, as evident in the work of the federation as a whole. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory.

The executive headteacher has had to take on far more responsibility for West Minster than was originally planned. Everyone is excited by the appointment of the new head of school, not least the executive headteacher, as this should enable greater sharing and delegation of responsibilities from September 2010.

As a result of satisfactory monitoring of lessons and careful analysis of pupils progress, the leadership team has correctly identified mathematics for improvement. A recent day devoted to problem solving in mathematics has helped with this, but there is still more to do. When speaking with pupils, a few girls commented, Maths can be difficult, we need more help. Leaders appreciate that sometimes their monitoring of lessons is too general. They know that more opportunities for extended writing are being created, but they have not looked at how well teachers are helping pupils, especially the most able, to edit and develop their work.

Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in school life. Equality is promoted and this is why leaders are working to improve opportunities for girls in mathematics and through widening provision for the most able to do as well as possible.

Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily, with strengths in the way that the specialist teaching in religious education is helping pupils to learn about other faiths. The federations decision to employ a specialist teacher for religious education aids this. Local community cohesion is sound and leaders are beginning to broaden awareness about the United Kingdom and the wider world. Well established links with Seashells Children's Centre aids local community cohesion well.

The federation governing body has developed its role since the last inspection. As a result, they have taken some firm, and sometimes difficult, actions to ensure that



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teaching and learning improve. As one governor explained, It is very different and exciting; you feel you are doing more for the pupils in Sheerness West. Recent training about understanding data is helping them to evaluate the work of the school in a more insightful way. The federation governing body is fully involved in development planning and exciting plans are well underway to improve the accommodation. As part of the federation, the school shares an inclusion manager with Rose Street Primary. At the moment, this only allows for three days of work between the two schools, which is not enough time considering the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</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 continue to join the school with often very low levels of skill, especially in their ability to communicate with others. At the end of Reception, progress is evident, although attainment is still below average. This represents some clear improvement in the achievement of the children and reflects the schools involvement in the Making a Big Difference project, the impact of satisfactory leadership and the growing links with parents.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with strengths in the good learning journey assessments. Activity planning is satisfactory but this sometimes lacks a clear focus on challenges for the most able children. Exciting plans are in place to rearrange the classrooms, so that the Nursery and Reception are linked. This is planned to help ensure that the Reception children have access to better outside learning opportunities. There is a clear emphasis on developing childrens personal, social and language skills,

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as was seen when children had fun playing in the seaside role-play area. There are plenty of suitable opportunities for children to develop their imaginations, creativity and their knowledge of the world around them, for example when children enjoyed finding out about mini-beasts. Whilst children develop their basic counting skills in a satisfactory way, they are not doing enough problem solving, addition and subtraction work. For example, opportunities were missed to go beyond basic skills when children counted sea creatures, the spots on ladybirds, and when counting ice creams in the seaside shop.

The care and welfare of children are good overall but during the inspection the Nursery kitchen area was accessible to children when no adult was present. This was due to the gate needing to be repaired. Close links with the health services and a strong focus on being healthy are especially strong features of the provision.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Although only a small proportion of parents returned the questionnaire, parents are very supportive of the school. They feel that their children enjoy school and are well prepared for the future. They are happy with the quality of teaching. Only a very few feel that the school does not deal with any unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors found that the school has some challenging pupils who are given clear guidance and support. As a result, behaviour in the school is good. A few parents made comments about the levels of challenge given to their children not being appropriate. The inspection team also found this. Parents individual comments include, I think the school has improved this year and individual teachers support children well.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Minster 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 332 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	59	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	77	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	54	17	44	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	62	12	31	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	64	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	54	15	38	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	62	14	36	1	3	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)	22	56	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	56	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	49	16	41	4	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	46	17	44	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	51	16	41	3	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	62	14	36	1	3	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](http://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"><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.**



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Minster Primary School, Sheerness ME12 1ET

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we spoke to you. Your school is a satisfactory school. This means that most things are suitable for you but some things need improving. You told us that you like school and have interesting things to do and we agree. You especially like the care shown by staff and we agree that this is good. In particular, you value the help given to you by the family liaison officer, we agree and think this is outstanding. These things help you to feel happy and safe at school. Your teachers have been working hard to improve your school. You are learning new things in a faster and more successful way than previously. Your reading and writing are improving. It was very pleasing to see you enjoying writing, such as your versions of The Enormous Crocodile. Well done for behaving well! We have asked the adults to work on some important things to make the school better still and here they are.

We want you to have more good lessons so that you can do better still, especially in mathematics. We would like girls to enjoy mathematics even more.

We have asked your teachers to help you to learn how to make some changes to your writing so that it gets even better.

Sometimes you have to sit on the carpet too long, whilst listening to your teachers. We have asked your teachers to improve this.

Teachers will also be working to make marking more helpful for you, so that you know exactly how to improve and have time to work on their comments.

Some of you, especially younger pupils, do not always come to school as often as you should. We would like you all to try as hard as possible to improve this.

A new head of school will be joining the school in September to help Mr Bayford. All of the leaders in the school will then be able to share their work out more and be able to check your learning and lessons in a very precise way.

Please continue to work hard, enjoy the summer and keep up the sports and music.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector

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