

Weston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111114
Local Authority	Halton
Inspection number	344702
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr John Swain
Headteacher	Miss Shirley Trimble
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2008
School address	Lamsickle Lane Weston Village Runcorn WA7 4RA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at pupils' learning; including five lessons observed, one learning walk, which involved visiting all classrooms for a short time and observation of intervention programmes; six teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), a few parents and carers, the local authority operational director and a local authority officer. The inspector looked at the documents relating to safeguarding, the school development plans, minutes of meetings held by the IEB, the school's analysis of the progress current pupils are making and notes of visits by the local authority officers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the issues for improvement from the last inspection and the following:

- the current attainment in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 and overall at the end of Key Stage 1; and learning and progress throughout the school
- the current quality of teaching and assessment
- whether the curriculum is fully implemented and meets pupils' needs
- how well pupils display positive outcomes
- the capacity of the senior leadership team to move the school forward.

Information about the school

Weston is a small village school. Almost all pupils are White British. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups have their first language as English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is that of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is partly because the school has a special education unit. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. There is a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority. The headteacher has been on long-term absence since October 2009. There is a Kids Club providing before- and after-school provision which is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection. The school holds the Artsmark silver, Activemark and Healthy School Standards Awards. .

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Weston now provides a satisfactory quality of education and is in a sound position to move forward.

Since the inspection in October 2008, Weston has successfully improved in nearly all aspects of its work. As a result, leadership and management; teaching and learning; the curriculum and pupils' achievement are now satisfactory. The school has lifted the quality of several key aspects to good, including care, guidance and support; the effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage; pupils' behaviour, enjoyment and safety and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Work still needs to be done to ensure pupils have an understanding of Britain's diverse population.

Pupils' learning has accelerated because of improvements in the quality of teaching, the well-targeted intervention programmes and the development of effective systems to track pupils' progress. Teachers now have a clearer picture of how each pupil is doing and where they should be aiming. Detailed planning identifies activities to be covered and what different ability groups will learn. Where good progress occurs in lessons, it is characterised by interesting and challenging work, clear expectations of each step of learning, the use of probing questioning to make pupils think, brisk pace and pupils talking things out with a partner. In addition, marking indicates how pupils can do better and informs them when they have met their targets. At present, these aspects, although improving, remain inconsistent and learning varies, especially for those pupils who learn quickly.

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average. A very large majority of pupils are working at, or close to, the level expected for their age. However, attainment could be higher. The focus the school has given to improve reading skills is starting to pay dividends as attainment in reading is higher than in other subjects. Pupils' work in mathematics is starting to rise as pupils can access and understand the technical vocabulary associated with problem solving. Pupils' writing skills are developing through the school's commitment to developing speaking and listening skills prior to writing.

Subject leaders have acted well on advice and training from the local authority consultants to improve the quality of provision. Collaborative working practices have ensured good leadership for all subjects. Team leaders have taken responsibility for action planning to develop subjects and the school now has in place the leadership and systems it needs to improve further. The acting headteacher provides good leadership

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for the school. In the short time she has been in post, she has won the respect of staff, pupils and parents. Roles have been clarified; performance management has been extended to include teaching assistants and much needed resources have been purchased.

Members of the IEB have been highly effective in reviewing the school's progress and holding senior leaders rigorously to account. Members have thoroughly evaluated all decisions based upon the impact on pupils' outcomes. The school development plan has, rightly, focused on the shorter-term aspects needed to lift the school's performance. Leaders have now turned attention to setting targets over a longer period of time based on mostly accurate self-evaluation. They recognise the need to set concise and quantifiable success criteria. Members have implemented an effective strategy to preserve the stability of the school during the substantive headteacher's absence. Taken together with improved provision and improved pupils' achievements, these actions result in the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring teachers' plans for all groups of pupils are turned into action
 - setting challenging targets which are understood by each pupil
 - ensuring marking clearly indicates the precise steps which pupils need to take to improve their work.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, by:
 - using more consistently searching and challenging questions to encourage pupils to think
 - ensure the pace of learning is brisk
 - enable teachers to observe outstanding teaching.
- Strengthen capacity to improve, by:
 - reviewing the school development plan to ensure success criteria are clear and quantifiable.
- Ensure that pupils have a better understanding of Britain's multicultural society by allowing opportunities for active engagement with other ethnic, cultural and religious groups.
- 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**

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and a willingness to please their teachers. They feel confident to 'have a go', persevere and take pride in successfully completing a piece of work. Pupils enjoy the fun, practical and active lessons which are more regular than

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at the time of the last inspection. Many pupils commented on the different subjects they now study and the visits that help them to have a deeper understanding of the work. Pupils are friendly, polite, cooperative and genuinely care for each other.

Many pupils in Year 2 did not reach the expected levels for their age in the 2009 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics; none reached the higher Level 3. This underachievement was directly linked to the quality of teaching for these pupils. However, pupils are now making good progress over Key Stage 1 and are on track to attain higher academic standards in 2010.

In the 2009 Key Stage 2 national tests for Year 6 pupils, attainment in English, mathematics and science at Level 4 and Level 5 was broadly in line with the national average. Progress in this key stage is starting to accelerate, especially in reading. The current Year 6 pupils are set to do better in 2010, especially in reading and writing at the higher Level 5. Effective checking of progress and identification of need results in swift intervention programmes for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; consequently these groups of pupils make progress which is at least in line with their classmates.

Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe in all areas of the school. They feel well cared for and comment on the improved security measures as a result of the school councillors' suggestions. Healthy lifestyles are promoted successfully through high levels of participation in sporting activities. The new bicycle shelters have resulted in many pupils cycling to school. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as road safety officers and play leaders. They are aware of other ethnic, cultural and religious groups within and beyond the United Kingdom but have few chances to meet these groups or to share activities with them.

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall; although it is stronger in Key Stage 1. There are several strengths which indicate the potential for the quality of teaching to be higher. Highly-detailed plans structure each lesson and indicate what groups of pupils are to learn. Classrooms have displays with key information to prompt and aid pupils in their learning. Several teachers have taken the opportunity to review the use of space in the classroom. Skilful teaching assistants are clear about their roles. They prepare their own resources; take the lead role in delivering support programmes to groups and individuals; take responsibility for assessing these pupils at the start and end of the programmes, and keep appropriate records.

The requirements of the National Curriculum are now fully met. Resources have been purchased to support the delivery of all subjects, especially for investigative work in science and books for reading. Enrichment of the curriculum has significantly improved. All staff lead a variety of well-attended activities after school, and visits and visitors are used to enliven subjects, for example, a visiting author to inspire writing.

Pupils are cared for very well. Great effort is made to ensure that the more vulnerable pupils receive the support needed to help them to be successful in school. Partnerships with other professionals ensure further expertise is available to support these pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Arrangements to help pupils settle in quickly and move on to the next stage of their education are handled well. Parents and carers spoken to commented on the more sensitive and improved arrangements in place now.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	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?

The quality of leadership and management and the capacity to improve have

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strengthened since the previous inspection. The acting headteacher has brought enthusiasm, vitality and a strong commitment to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. In this she is supported by a team of teachers, teaching assistants and other members of staff who subscribe to her drive and ambition. The pace of improvement has recently accelerated and action taken is beginning to show in outcomes for pupils. All staff have appreciated the chance to receive professional development training to improve the quality of their provision, through initiatives such as 'talk for writing' and assessing pupils' progress. The organisation of all staff into subject teams to support each other and use specific expertise is working well.

Members of the Interim Executive Board, including officers of the local authority, have been highly instrumental in the improvements in Weston. Members have ensured pupils are safe and all statutory requirements are in place. The school takes its duty to promote equality of opportunity seriously. Statutory requirements are in place and the staff monitor the achievement of different groups. It has yet to evaluate the participation of different groups in all aspects of school life. Community cohesion is satisfactory. A full audit of the school's work in this area has been undertaken and planned actions have started to take place.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has successfully established a close partnership between home and school. Children are taught well in a stimulating environment. Areas of learning are well defined and resources readily available to all children. Children confidently use all that is on offer

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and enjoy their time in the class. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities which are followed by opportunities for children to follow their own curiosity. For example, children squealed with delight as they used glue and paper to cover a balloon, which according to one little girl would be used 'so I can float away into the sky'; not really just pretend'. Assessment has improved so that now daily assessment is used to plan the next session and the use of 'learning journals' ensures children's progress is well tracked. Developing children's speaking and listening skills is given careful attention. The daily, highly-focused session to develop sounds engages and challenges children.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are generally below that expected for those of a similar age. However, as numbers entering the school can be small this can alter from year to year. Progress is good so that all children achieve the skills and knowledge expected for that age group with a significant proportion achieving above. Staff work well as a team and the daily organisation ensures a smooth change from morning to afternoon. Staff and children look forward to using the plentiful resources in the almost-completed, very attractive outdoor area.

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

The inspector met and talked with a small number of parents and carers. Views from these parents and carers are very positive about the changes in the school. Several had not been happy with the education that their children were receiving; this has dramatically changed. Comments were made about the positive welcome they receive, the guidance in supporting their children, the renewed energy and approach by all the staff, the positive support for vulnerable pupils and the better arrangements when children start in the Reception class. They particularly appreciated the out-of-school clubs and consider these are instrumental in the way all staff know all pupils. They particularly like the quick response by the acting headteacher to any concerns they have and have started a Weston United parents' association.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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.



4 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Primary School, Runcorn WA7 4RA

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help on my visits to your school to see how well you are learning. You told me how much you enjoy school, even more so now that you have more exciting lessons and lots of interesting activities to do. You proudly showed me the new bicycle shelters and the outdoor area for the younger children. You told me about the many out-of-school activities your teachers now provide for you; the visits you make and the visitors you have, to help you understand your topics more.

Weston has come a long way since my first visit in February last year. Your parents and carers think things are better and I agree. This was my last visit to Weston as you are now receiving a satisfactory education and the school no longer needs 'special measures'. Compared to the time of the previous inspection in October 2008, most of you are making better progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Weston has still some way to go to make sure that everything is the best so I have asked the governors, Mrs Atkins and all the staff to do the following:

- help you all do better in English, mathematics and science by making sure the activities your teachers plan for you are carried out; you receive challenging targets; and, when your work is marked, you know what to do next time to improve it
- increase the proportion of good or better teaching by encouraging your teachers to ask you questions to make you think, to make sure lessons move at a brisk pace and to go and see other really good teachers to pick up ideas to use in the classroom
- review the plans to improve the school to make sure the success criteria are clear.
- give you chances to meet people from other ethnic, cultural and religious groups so you get a better understanding of Britain's multicultural society.

Yours sincerely

Eileen M Mulgrew

Her Majesty's Inspector

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