

Wheatlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111659
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	354368
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	John Paddick

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	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev John Weetman
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Green
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2006
School address	Hundale Crescent Redcar North Yorkshire TS10 2PU
Telephone number	01642 489784
Fax number	01642 490855
Email address	wheatlands_head@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 19 lessons and scrutinised a wide variety of examples of pupils' written work. Almost all teachers in the school at the time of the inspection were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, teachers and classroom assistants and a group of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, governors' minutes, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. They analysed 184 questionnaires from parents and carers, 100 from pupils in Years 3 to 6 and 26 from members of staff.

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

- current standards of pupils' work in Year 6, particularly in writing
- progress being made by different groups of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented
- effectiveness of the temporary arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Wheatlands Primary School serves a new estate to the south of the town centre. It is much larger than average for its type. Most of the pupils are drawn from homes which are quite close to the school. Almost all are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around 4% and rising, which is much smaller than average. Six per cent of the pupils on roll have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below average. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make up just over 1% of the school's population, which is broadly average. The school has Activemark, Healthy School and Travel Plan awards. Childcare provision, which is not run by the governing body, was inspected separately. The report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Wheatlands Primary School provides its pupils with a good standard of education. There are some outstanding features such as the high quality care, guidance and support. Its good reputation in the locality means that it is popular with parents and carers. The school's self-evaluation procedures are effective in providing a constant agenda for change and improvement. They ensure a continuously strong focus on improving teaching and raising standards. Staff morale and the capacity for further improvement to the next level are good.

Pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Attainment improves from in line with expectations in the Nursery to above average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Frequently, it is higher than that. This is because all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented are effectively challenged to do their best. The atmosphere for learning is uniformly good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their education, cooperate very well with the staff and develop good levels of maturity and confidence. The good opportunities to take responsibility within school and to participate in activities in the community, play a central role in helping pupils develop a wide range of skills that will serve them well in the future. Exceptionally productive links with a wide variety of outside agencies help to enrich the curriculum through extra support for pupils who need it, visits, sporting and cultural activities and community projects.

The excellent quality of care, guidance and support firmly underpins the good progress that pupils make in their academic work and in their personal development. Teachers and their classroom assistants mostly provide lessons of good or high quality. Just occasionally, the pace of learning dips when lessons incorporate too much teacher talk. Resources are used well in most areas of the school to promote a variety of approach and to maintain pupils' interest. However, there is still scope for improving the range of equipment and activities in the outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The very carefully planned curriculum presents basic skills to pupils at the same time as widening their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects such as geography and history. This is an exceptionally strong feature of the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the use of the outdoor area so that it provides more purposeful opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to explore, investigate, and improve language and problem-solving skills.
- Improve the rate of pupils' progress in a minority of lessons by increasing pace and

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striking a better balance between teacher talk and pupil activity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good because all groups of pupils make good progress with and enjoy their learning as they move from the Nursery classes to Year 6. The school has a good reputation for the quality of its work with pupils having special educational needs because it ensures that effective extra help is provided to reduce or remove barriers to pupils' progress. The current work in pupils' books and folders shows that they have been making good progress over several years. Standards in writing, numerical work, science, geography, history, and information and communication technology are all above average. Most pupils develop good handwriting skills and really take a pride in the presentation of their work. Gifted and talented pupils are producing very good quality scientific reports and mathematical calculations, which would more usually be found in Years 7 to 9 of the secondary phase. Pupils' writing has improved substantially and is now well above average.

Pupils display good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around school at break and lunchtimes. They enjoy their education and are keen to do well. These positive aspects of personal development are promoted strongly and effectively by the staff and help to underpin the good progress that pupils make with their learning. Pupils say that they feel perfectly safe in school and that staff deal effectively with any bullying on the rare occasions that it occurs. They have a good grasp of what healthy living involves and most are keen to eat and drink what is good for them and participate widely in sport. Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunity to take responsibility within school and to participate in activities in the community. For example, the eco-committee promotes green issues, playtime buddies help to develop younger pupils' confidence and the choir has a very good reputation for its performances in the locality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	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 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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching enables all groups of pupils to progress well as they move through the school. Staff create an excellent learning atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate on their work and participate productively in discussions. Lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace so time is used well and pupils learn quickly. In a small proportion of lessons, there is a tendency for the teacher to talk for too long. This results in a slowing in the rate of learning as pupils become inattentive. A very strong feature of most lessons is the way that teachers constantly relate what the pupils are learning to life outside the classroom and the world in general. This very effectively broadens their general knowledge while they are developing their basic skills. There is some outstanding teaching which promotes very high standards of recording, written work and calculation. Teachers mark pupils' written work very thoroughly so they know what they have done well and how to improve on weaknesses.

The curriculum is one of the school's strong features. It provides secure pathways for all groups of pupils to improve their basic skills at a good rate. Themes in history, geography and science link effectively with the promotion of progress with reading, writing, numerical skills and the use of computers. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra experiences, for example green issues, music, poetry, visits to places of interest, drama and sport. This means that they have a fully rounded and very beneficial education.

Parents fully recognise and appreciate the outstandingly good quality of care, guidance and support that their children receive. Pupils are all known extremely well and when necessary they receive expert individual attention that enables them to thrive, particularly in their personal development. An example is the excellent reading recovery programme which ensures that pupils overcome difficulties and make good progress, not only with reading and writing, but also with the development of social skills. Frequently, the school employs outside specialists to cater fully for pupils' needs, especially when they are particularly challenging. Transfer arrangements to the local secondary school are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management are at the heart of this successful school. The senior team provides strong direction and a relentless and effective focus on the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and the continuous development of a creative curriculum. They communicate their shared vision for the school extremely clearly so that members of staff at all levels of seniority know exactly what is expected of them. The school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis because it is well organised and routines are well understood by staff and pupils. All required measures for the safeguarding of pupils are firmly in place and meet current guidelines. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and there is no evidence of discrimination of any description. Governors challenge and probe where necessary and take a very active role in monitoring the school's work and improvement, often through visits when lessons are proceeding.

Arrangements for the promotion of community cohesion are good. Pupils' community work in school and the immediate locality is extremely strong but the number of productive links with people from the different cultures that make up the United Kingdom still requires some further development. Extremely effective planned partnerships with organisations and individuals enhance the quality of pupils' education. Examples are local churches, secondary schools and theatre groups, musicians, artists and a poet. Very productive partnerships with outside agencies provide extremely effective extra educational and personal support to pupils who need it.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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	
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make a very secure start to their education. They enter Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age overall and in almost all areas of learning they make good progress. By the time they leave Reception, children are reaching or exceeding almost all the nationally expected levels, except for learning sounds and letters.

Children benefit from good teaching and they are confident and happy in the welcoming and safe environment that the school provides. They soon learn how to form friendships and share. Teaching assistants and other volunteers are well deployed and very effectively help to extend the quality of play and children's speaking and listening skills. Good use of assessment means that lessons build securely on the progress that children have made. However, there is still scope to develop children's independence further particularly through the planning of a greater range of purposeful activities in the outside area.

There is satisfactory leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage while the school is in the process of appointing a new leader for this area. Good opportunities for parents and carers to be fully involved include frequent conversations with staff and through the 'learning journey' booklets which carefully chart children's progress.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. It has a good reputation in the locality. They are almost unanimously happy about all aspects of its work. The exceptions are that a minority of parents believe that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that it does not take enough account of their suggestions or concerns. The inspection team did not witness any unacceptable

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behaviour and pupils confirm that instances of it are quite rare. The team was assured that members of staff make every effort to listen to suggestions and concerns from parents or carers. They can always make an appointment to make their views known. However, as the staff say, there are always bound to be occasions when parents, carers and members of staff do not agree about what is good practice or about how to overcome difficulties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wheatlands 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 184 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 455 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	121	66	56	30	6	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	59	68	37	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	42	98	53	9	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	49	86	47	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	101	55	79	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	48	87	47	8	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	49	86	47	5	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)	75	41	95	52	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	86	47	87	47	8	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	34	97	53	18	10	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	32	98	53	15	8	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	78	42	97	53	4	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	101	55	75	41	5	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). 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.



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wheatlands Primary School, Redcar, TS10 2PU

Thank you for the welcome you gave to my team when we came to inspect your school recently. We were particularly impressed by your politeness and courtesy. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in our questionnaires, met with us and answered our questions while you were working. We really enjoyed our visit and I am pleased to report that Wheatlands Primary School provides a good quality of education for you.

The school is organised well, which is important because there are so many of you, and the atmosphere for learning is always good. Lessons are usually good and sometimes outstanding. This helps you to make good progress and reach the above and sometimes well above average standards that are evident in Year 6. We are pleased to note that you enjoy coming to school and that you achieve well. The teachers and classroom assistants go out of their way to make lessons interesting by linking your writing, number and work with computers to the world outside the school. We were particularly impressed by the quite exceptional care, guidance and support that are available for you.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governing body to do two things to make your school even better. These are to:

- improve a small number of lessons where the teacher spends too much time explaining things and giving instructions
- provide more equipment and organised activities for children in Nursery and Reception for lessons outside.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Paddick

Lead inspector

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