

Werneth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135342
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	341637
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Isherwood HMI

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	541
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Colley
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Holroyd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 18 teachers. Eighty five per cent of time was spent looking at learning. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, monitoring reports, the work pupils were doing in their books, and the questionnaires completed by 292 parents.

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

- how well pupils achieve from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics
- the quality of pupils' learning and engagement in lessons and across the curriculum
- whether teaching is consistent enough to improve outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in raising standards further
- the capacity of the school to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school in an area of high social disadvantage. All pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Ninety seven per cent of pupils are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Nursery sessions and three Reception groups. The school was formed, following the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school in September 2008. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher held the same positions in the infant school. During 2008 and 2009, the school underwent significant building work and refurbishment and there have been a number of changes to staffing, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school has been fully staffed from September 2009. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Standard and the Eco School Award.

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

This is a satisfactory and improving school that takes good care of its pupils and has outstanding links with parents and carers. It is a happy place for pupils to learn. As a consequence, the majority of pupils make expected gains in their learning from their starting points, although increasing numbers are making good progress as a result of improvements to their teaching and learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, feel safe in school and behave well. When asked to express their views, there was strong praise for their learning mentor, the support they receive from staff and the wide range of activities on offer. 'The school has exciting visitors who we learn from.' said one child.

A very large majority of parents are supportive: 'My child is excited to come to school.', 'The staff are wonderful, always approachable.' and 'The school is always encouraging us as parents to take part and get involved.' were typical comments.

Although standards in 2009 were low at the end of Year 6, pupil's achievement is satisfactory and improving. Current school assessments show improvements since 2009 in reading and writing in Year 2 and Year 6. There is an upward trend in performance and standards are rising. Progress is satisfactory overall but is gathering pace well because of increasingly effective use of assessment information and more creative opportunities in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the progress pupils make in mathematics and the progress of higher attaining pupils are not as rapid as in other areas. This is because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in how work is matched to pupils' differing needs, particularly for those who are capable of working at a higher level. Teaching is mainly satisfactory with some examples of good practice. Where teaching is strongest, the range of teaching styles allows pupils to flourish with a variety of tasks that allow pupils to think about how they learn, direct their own activities and work independently. Where teaching is less effective opportunities are missed to fully engage pupils in their learning and pupils' work is over-directed. Information shared with pupils about their progress is satisfactory. There are some good examples in teachers' comments where pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work and reach their next target. However, senior leaders are well aware that academic guidance to pupils in teachers' marking lacks consistency in some quarters. It is better in those classes where teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn effectively. Attendance, although below average, is improving because the school has worked hard to reduce persistent absence and discourage holidays and extended visits taken during term time. However, senior leaders are correct in recognising that improving attendance further by working with parents and pupils remains a key priority for the school.

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The school is moving forward from a relatively new beginning under the determined leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher who have battled hard to get the new school to this point. With the good support of colleagues they have begun to lay the foundations for further improvements in pupils' learning and in raising their achievement. There is clear agreement amongst staff and governors on the direction the school must take to improve further. The school has focused on improving areas of weakness in teaching and provision. As result, and because there is a trend of improvement in key areas, despite a few remaining weaknesses, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by:
 - increasing pupils' progress in mathematics
 - matching work more closely to pupils' differing needs, particularly for the more able.
- Increase the proportion of good and better lessons by:
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to be actively engaged in their learning
 - using marking and target-setting more consistently to help pupils understand how to improve their work.
- Improve attendance further by:
 - working with parents to investigate and address key issues relating to health and absence
 - reviewing, in consultation with pupil groups, the range and impact of incentives to improve attendance and raise pupils' awareness of the importance of attending school regularly
 - reducing extended absence by continuing to make parents aware of the school policy.

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

Pupils are eager to learn and apply themselves well in class. They have positive attitudes to their work and are generally well-behaved. Their enjoyment of learning is seen in the way they try hard to do their best and are keen to answer questions. Pupils are good at cooperating with each other when working in small groups or pairs. They particularly enjoy activities where they can make decisions about how they learn and think of different ways of tackling their work by discussing and sharing their ideas with others. A whole-school focus on 'learning' is developing teachers' awareness of effective practice. Although not yet consistent in all classes there are increasing opportunities for pupils to be more engaged in their work. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as pupils made good progress in using and applying their mathematical

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knowledge by investigating how much 'Slick Jim' won on the lottery after spending percentages of his winnings on a range of luxury items, including a house, a car and a hot air balloon.

Pupils' current work, as well as the test results for 2009, shows that while their attainment is low, the progress pupils make from their starting points is satisfactory and improving securely. Pupils enter Year 1 below the levels expected. Work in lessons and in pupils' books suggests that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school to Year 6. Although standards in 2009 were low in all core subjects at the end of Year 6, there are signs that increasing numbers of pupils are making better progress than previously and that standards are beginning to rise. A notable success is that in reading and writing pupils in Year 6 made gains of one National Curriculum level in just one year. This reflects the improving impact of the school's work and intervention. However, the progress pupils make in mathematics is not as rapid as in other areas.

Pupils speak highly of their learning mentor and say they feel safe in school. As one child said, 'You can trust that no one is going to harm you.' They are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and that any problems will be resolved swiftly. They develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on responsibilities such as joining the gardening club, being a 'playground pal' or becoming a member of the active school council. They help raise funds for charity and make decisions about changes to the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and deserve their National Healthy School Status. They enjoy healthy snacks at playtime and the wide range of physical activities provided, including swimming and walking to school through the 'Golden Boot' award.

Despite the school's best efforts, pupils' attendance, while steadily improving, is a difficult nut to crack. This is because too many holidays and extended visits are taken by families during term time and the levels of persistent absence are too high.

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is shown in the respect that pupils have for each other and for people from different ethnic groups. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to contrast village life here with people's lives in Bangladesh in their 'New Beginnings' project. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of truth, justice and fairness in philosophy lessons and are encouraged to stand up and speak out when they believe that something is wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mainly satisfactory with some that is good. The better lessons have a brisk pace and achieve their objectives well. Expectations are high, teachers plan well and have positive relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, especially for those that find learning difficult. In these lessons pupils are actively engaged in their learning and are presented with a good range of practical activities. Effective questioning keeps pupils on their toes, which results in good levels of interest and enthusiasm. Where teaching is less strong, the range of teaching styles is limited, work is over-directed and there is a lack of demand, stimulus and activity for some learners. Some of the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. This means that learning is not as effective as it could be because pupils are not actively involved in making their own decisions and are too passive at times. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations, particularly in mathematics. As a consequence, pupils make less progress and are not inspired by some of the activities. Where lessons lack pace or challenge, pupils' interest wanes and restlessness ensues.

Systems to track pupils' progress are much improved and benefit from the outcomes of regular reviews. As a result, intervention and support are targeted well for those pupils at risk of falling behind. Teachers are increasingly aware of what each child can do and what they need to learn next, although in some lessons assessment information is not used sufficiently well to plan challenging activities for the more able pupils. Teachers' guidance to pupils through marking and target-setting is patchy. There are some good examples where pupils are given clear advice about how to improve their work and

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reach their next target. However, this effective practice is not used consistently in all classes and, in some books, pupils' work is poorly presented. On occasions, the written guidance from staff to pupils is inaccurate in spelling and grammar.

The curriculum is improving and is adequately matched to pupils' needs. Careful attention is given to the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Further work on developing pupils' thinking and creative skills is planned and cross-curricular links through themes and visits are being developed further.

No stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and supported. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils are very well supported by all staff. Careful attention is given to the emotional needs of pupils through regular circle-time sessions and there are effective procedures for introducing children to school and for ensuring pupils smooth transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher, has shown great resolve in leading the school through a period of turmoil and disruption following the amalgamation. Together, with the support of staff and governors, they are leading the school down the right path and have set sail on the right course. They are highly committed to see the school improve further and have concentrated their efforts on raising achievement and in improving the quality of learning for all pupils, whatever their circumstances. Effective action has been taken to accelerate the progress further of boys and in raising pupils' achievement in mathematics. As a result the school's commitment to equality is strong and the school is effective in improving pupils' life chances and in tackling discrimination. There is clear agreement about what the school does well and where further improvements are required. For example, senior leaders are well aware that the school improvement plan requires some fine-tuning to ensure a sharper focus on measuring success.

Bringing two very different schools together and establishing an agreed vision of effective learning has not been easy for senior leaders, with so many changes to staff. Nevertheless, there are some positive signs that their efforts to coach and encourage effective practice are being rewarded.

The school actively promotes community cohesion within the school community and is

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reaching out to other communities through special themes, celebrations of different festivals and links with another school in a different context. Senior leaders are not complacent and recognise that the school's analysis of its community and procedures to judge the impact of the school's work require further attention.

The school has good safeguarding procedures. Staff are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that pupils may encounter. All required checks, systems and procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils' well-being.

The school is very successful in its engagement with parents and carers. Its work to promote involvement and close cooperation between home and school through the 'Parents Champion' group is outstanding. For example, parents are provided with excellent support to help with their children's learning at home and have been able to access training to improve their confidence and parenting skills. As one parent said, 'I am so much more confident as a parent with my child now.' Another commented that, 'The school had helped me to return to work after five years.'

Governors are increasingly confident to act where necessary to support improvements or to question proposals. They are committed to see the school improve. They engage well with staff and are aware of the main challenges that the school still faces.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

When children start in the nursery their skills and levels of learning vary but overall are well below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. By the time they transfer to Year 1, although still below the levels expected of them, many

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have made good progress from their starting points, especially in their personal development. This is because of the warm, nurturing environment that prevails where children are very well cared for and supported. Children settle quickly into routines, are taught well and are encouraged to become independent through a good range of activities that are well-targeted on their stages of development. They are keen to take an active part in learning and there is a purposeful buzz to activities. Good use of the outdoor environment mirrors the learning inside. There is a good balance of child-chosen and adult-led activities which means that children have increasing confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as follow clearly established routines, although when choosing activities many children prefer to stay in their own gender groups. Staff are skilled at extending children's language as they work alongside. Their gentle encouragement raises children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are ever watchful over children's safety and well-being and continually assess how well children are achieving. Parents are kept well-informed and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. There is a good understanding of the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made.

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

A very large majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school. There is strong agreement that children enjoy school, make good progress and that the school is well led and managed. A very small minority of parents and carers said that the school does not help them to support their child's learning, the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and the school does not meet the needs of pupils. Inspectors disagree with these minority views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Werneth 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 292 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 541 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	165	57	119	41	7	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	169	58	115	39	6	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	123	42	144	49	22	8	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	99	34	162	55	24	8	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	131	45	143	49	11	4	4	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	130	45	133	46	23	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	127	43	156	53	8	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)	96	33	159	54	19	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	100	34	160	55	26	9	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	108	37	165	57	11	4	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	90	31	161	55	23	8	8	3
The school is led and managed effectively	108	37	164	56	9	3	7	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	131	45	141	48	16	5	3	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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. ■ 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 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Werneth Primary School, Oldham, OL8 4BL

Thank you for the kind welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, on the playground and in the pupil interviews. We learnt a great deal about your school. This is what we found out.

You go to a satisfactory school that is improving well. You make expected levels of progress in your work from Year 1 to Year 6, although some of you are making better progress than before in your reading and writing because your lessons are getting better. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress and get off to a good start. You are well looked after. Your school is very good at helping and supporting your parents to work with your teachers.

We were very pleased to hear about your Heartstart project and to see how much you know about the 'kiss of life' and putting people in the recovery position. We were delighted to see the Bollywood dancers in Year 2 perform and we were impressed with your kindness towards others when those of you in Year 4 were discussing the terrible earthquake in Haiti.

You told us that your lessons are becoming more interesting and are often fun and exciting. We could see this with our own eyes when those of you in the juniors were talking about controlling your anger in circle-time, when those of you in Year 1 were making bread in the 'Pudding Lane Bakery' and when those of you in Year 2 were using plastic trays and boxes in learning about numbers.

Your teachers work hard to make the school as good as it can be. To help them we have asked if you could make faster progress in your work, particularly in mathematics, and if some of you could be given harder work. We have asked whether more of your lessons could be like the best ones we saw when you were very involved in making decisions about how you learn and were able to investigate things for yourselves. We have also asked that when your teachers mark your work they always give you advice on how to improve further. Finally, we have asked the school to work with you and your parents to improve your attendance still further. This is because your attendance is still below the level of other schools.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by doing your best to attend school more

regularly.

Thank you once again for talking with us about your school and showing us your work. We can see why your teachers love working with you every day.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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