

Westminster Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111086
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	356862
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Harding
Headteacher	Sue Finch
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed five teachers in 10 lessons and group sessions and held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' plans, pupils' books, assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, school policies, and examined 25 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils are achieving as well as they can in English.
- The extent to which teaching is consistent through the school and between subjects.
- The extent to which pupils' achievement and attendance reflect the effectiveness of care, guidance and support.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and all the classes contain more than one year group. Almost all of the pupils are from a White British background. A very small number are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has Healthy School Status, the Activemark and the Parenting Kite Mark.

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

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils, including the most vulnerable. Each pupil is treated as an individual and their needs are identified and addressed at a very early stage. Pupils feel safe in the supportive and secure school environment and their behaviour is good.

The headteacher and the leadership team have been relentless in examining the school's work to see how it can be improved. A variety of strategies, including a greater use of practical resources, have been introduced, resulting in a good improvement in attainment in mathematics over the past three years. Strategies to improve standards in English, particularly writing, have been slower to take effect. However, regular sessions of teaching letter sounds, spellings and punctuation and increased opportunities for writing for a variety of purposes are having an impact. Attainment in English has improved steadily, year on year, and most pupils in Year 6 are now working at the level expected for their age.

Teaching is good and teachers use a wide range of methods to help pupils to learn. However, in some lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to speak and explain their ideas. This restricts their vocabulary when writing.

The school has worked closely with families and developed many ways to improve attendance. These are having a measurable effect. However, despite the school's best efforts, a very small minority of pupils are persistently absent.

There has been good progress in all the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection. The headteacher has coordinated a thorough and accurate evaluation of the school's work and has developed a clear and effective plan for developments. Standards are rising through the school and the whole leadership team have been an integral part of this success. The school has a good capacity to build on these improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to speak and explain so they can develop their ideas and widen their vocabulary.

- Improve the attendance of the small minority of pupils who are persistently absent by building on the school’s close links with their families, to reinforce the importance of coming to school each day.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy lessons and achieve well when they are actively involved, for example, when they experience drama to help them to understand and write about the life of a young chimney sweep in Victorian times. Pupils respond well to high expectations of behaviour and this makes a good contribution to their learning. In some cases, pupils do not have the vocabulary to explain their thoughts and this can hinder their learning.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are usually below and sometimes well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in language and social skills. They make good progress through the school and attainment is improving steadily. Attainment has been broadly average in mathematics over the past two years. Though improving year on year attainment in English, particularly writing, has been below average. However, the school’s good systems for assessing and tracking pupils’ progress, and the work in their books, indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are now working at the level expected for their age in English and that standards in mathematics have been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because their needs are identified at an early age and they receive excellent support and guidance. Similarly, the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well.

Pupils feel safe because they have confidence in the adults in school and in the secure surroundings. They say that the school has very thorough procedures for dealing with the very rare instances of bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of how to remain fit and healthy. In particular, they can readily identify healthier food options. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community as school councillors and recycling officers. Their contribution to the wider community is less developed but improving.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A good understanding of the difference between right and wrong is evident in pupils’ good behaviour. Several soloists sang very movingly, adding to the spiritual atmosphere in an assembly during the inspection. Pupils’ readiness for their future lives is restricted by attendance that is no more than average.

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	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2

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

The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall and some outstanding practice was observed in the class for the oldest pupils. This was characterised by a high level of challenge, very good demonstrations and excellent use of time limits to maintain pace. Teachers make good use of a wide range of practical resources to help pupils to learn. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 had to consider the properties of different shapes before placing them in the appropriate group. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and make good suggestions for improvement. They take good account of information about pupils' learning and plan work that is well-matched to their needs. Support staff are well informed and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In some lessons, there are limited opportunities for pupils' to explain their ideas and speak in well-constructed sentences and this hinders the development of language and writing skills.

There is a good emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons and in other subjects. Following a visit to Styal Mill pupils in Key Stage 2 wrote about the apprentices and plotted a graph to show the changes in their number during the 19th century. The whole-school emphasis on problem-solving and investigating has helped to improve attainment in mathematics. Strategies, such as regular practice of letter sounds and opportunities to write at length are now having an impact on literacy skills. The school is now looking to provide more opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The good programme of personal, social and health education and the ethos of treating each other with respect promote personal development well. The school has developed a good programme for pupils identified as having a particular talent, including workshops at the university. There is a good range of visitors and visits, including two residential trips, to enhance the curriculum. The good range of after-school clubs is well attended.

The outstanding care, guidance and support is concentrated firmly on the needs of the individual and is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at a very early stage and the school is vigilant in addressing their precise requirements. Staff have been known to seek specialist training where a specific need of an individual is identified. The excellent support for the most vulnerable, including their families, is having a good impact on pupils' progress. The school has developed extensive ways to encourage good attendance and this has improved overall. However, the school is exploring further methods of encouraging the very small minority of pupils who are persistently absent. The school has excellent links with other professionals where specialist support is needed, for

example those pupils who have benefited from speech and language therapy have made good progress. The well-supervised breakfast club provides a calm and welcoming start to the day and is freely available to all.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

The members of the good leadership team, led by a far-sighted headteacher, work enthusiastically together to bring about improvements. The good tracking systems are used rigorously to identify and address any interruption to progress and this is having a good impact on attainment. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning systematically and this has led to improvements in the use of resources and in marking of pupils' work. The governing body provides good support whilst being equally prepared to challenge the headteacher as she has implemented the necessary strategies to take the school forward.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many engage in workshops to enable them to support their children's learning at home. The monthly family lunches provide a good opportunity for them to join their children in school. The school works effectively with many partners. Good links with the high school have helped to enhance provision in information and communication technology. The school's close dialogue with the local authority has enabled the school to access a good range of specialist support and advice.

The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Leaders monitor the progress of individuals and groups carefully to ensure that all achieve equally well. Robust procedures for safeguarding children are in place, reflecting good practice in all aspects of the school's work. For example, the school makes good use of technology to provide a safe environment. The school reaches out to the local community and hosts regular community dinners. A local environmental group has worked with pupils to gather ideas for improving open spaces in the locality. The school is now working to develop links with groups different from those represented locally.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and most are working close to the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. They enjoy their learning and they achieve well. One parent wrote that the school had made her child want to learn more every day while still making it fun to do. What a good introduction to school life!

The teacher plans a good range of purposeful, practical activities that demonstrate a good understanding of how young children learn. Letter sounds and counting skills are taught systematically and well. There is now a drive to increase the focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills to improve this aspect of their learning. A good emphasis is rightly placed on personal, social and emotional development. Children respond well to the expectation to put up their hands rather than shouting out answers. They are gaining a good understanding of routines as they tidy away after their healthy snack and put the orange peel in the compost box. Adults work effectively as a team, for example, making notes as they observe children achieving a particular skill. The information is used well to plan the next steps of their learning. There is good provision for children from the Reception class in the breakfast club where they can enjoy a good start to the day.

There are good procedures for introducing children to school, including home visits, and the good links with the adjacent nursery help children to settle quickly. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at a very early stage, sometimes before they start school, and they receive good support. All the recommended systems for safeguarding children are in place.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned a completed questionnaire was below average. Their responses suggest that parents and carers are happy with all that the school provides. Inspectors endorse these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westminster Community 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 inspector received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	60	9	36	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	68	7	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	65	9	36	0	0	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)	13	52	9	36	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	40	13	52	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	40	15	60	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	56	11	44	0	0	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westminster Community Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH65 2ED

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in groups. We think you are polite, friendly and well behaved, which is a credit to you, your parents and carers and your school.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that Westminster is a good school. In fact the way the school takes care of you and gives you extra help when you need it is outstanding, which is the highest praise I can give.

The staff have worked very hard over the last few years to make improvements in your school. Lessons are interesting and practical and this has helped you to learn more quickly. I was very tempted to join in when Year 5 and 6 were rotating shapes on the geo-boards. You are doing well in mathematics and more recently your reading and writing have improved. Well done!

It is part of our job to suggest ways in which even a good school could be better. The adults are going to help you to achieve even higher standards by:

- giving you more opportunities to explain your ideas so that you can write about them more easily
- encouraging those of you who have a lot of time off school to attend each day.

It is so important that you come to school regularly, unless you are ill, of course.

Best wishes to you all. We hope you continue to enjoy learning.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Shirley Herring
Lead inspector

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