

Wistaston Green Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134998
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	360672
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Fisher

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	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gary Douglas
Headteacher	Ms Linda Davis
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 22 lessons. The inspectors observed 14 teachers and other staff, and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at: school policies; pupils' assessment information; curriculum planning; improvement plans; local authority reports about the school; and safeguarding documentation. The inspectors analysed the responses contained in 35 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 107 from pupils and 30 from staff.

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

- The quality of learning and the rates of progress made by all groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching and its effectiveness in raising attainment across the school.
- The capacity of school leaders at all levels to bring about and sustain improvement in pupil achievement.

Information about the school

Wistaston Green Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportions with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The school has a significant number of pupils who are in local authority care. The percentage of pupils from minority-ethnic groups is broadly average. The percentage that speak English as an additional language is broadly average and rising. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Activemark and Healthy School status. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the last inspection. Many pupils join the school other than at the usual times of admission.

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

Wistaston Green Primary and Nursery School is a good school. Pupils consistently make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in the development of their social, reading and numeracy skills from their starting points. Sustained improvement is evident across the school. Whilst attainment over time has been consistently low in recent years, the school is now enabling pupils to make up for historical underachievement and hence there is a strong upward trend in attainment. As a result pupils are significantly 'closing the gap' and attainment is approaching national expectations in each year group in Key Stage 2.

After a period of significant turnover of teaching staff, the school has now entered a period of stability. Action to overcome weaknesses in teaching, school organisation and pupil outcomes has been sharply focused, concerted and effective. School self-evaluation is accurate. School leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Attainment is rising sharply and securely and, as a result, the school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils readily say that they feel safe. The school has clear and effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour and, with a few minor exceptions, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They appreciate the healthy school lunches on offer, are very active participants in physical education lessons and are successful in numerous local and county inter-school sports competitions.

Teaching is good and most lessons meet the needs of all groups of pupils effectively. Teachers place a strong and successful emphasis on the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers encourage pupils to talk in pairs and groups, though opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking to wider audiences, such as the whole class, are not highly developed. Pupils' writing skills are less well developed than those in reading and numeracy and while pupils' writing skills are improving in literacy lessons, there is less evidence of them regularly applying their writing skills in a range of subjects across the curriculum. The quality of teachers' marking and its impact on bringing about improvement is a strength of the school.

Senior leaders work well as a team. They understand the school's priorities and that the school must not relax in its efforts to improve pupil outcomes. There is a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to improvement. However, many of the school's middle leaders are relatively new to their posts and consequently their monitoring and evaluation roles are not yet highly developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment further, especially in the development of their speaking and writing skills, by:

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- ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils
 - giving pupils regular structured opportunities to talk and with increasing use of subject specific vocabulary
 - ensuring that all adults use good questioning techniques
 - giving pupils appropriate opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different purposes.
- Ensure that middle leaders develop their roles more effectively by:
- closely monitoring progress in their areas of responsibility and taking effective action to make sure that no pupil falls behind
 - regularly monitoring, evaluating and reporting on plans and policies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are attentive in lessons; they follow instructions from adults promptly, behave well, work hard and enjoy themselves. They appreciate their school and look after it well. They say that they particularly enjoy their art and design lessons. The following are typical examples of pupils' positive attitudes. As part of a 'starter' in a Year 3 and 4 lower set literacy lesson, pupils were asked to work in groups to list as many of words as they could in a minute. Groups quickly and quietly compiled correctly-written lists including words such as 'coil', 'point', 'toilet' and 'spoil'. In a Year 5 physical education (PE) lesson, pairs of pupils played a range of games safely and energetically to improve their movement, throwing and catching skills.

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are significantly lower than those typically expected for their age, particularly in relation to their personal development and their communication skills. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently low in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection. However, there is convincing evidence that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are now making at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in these subjects and the gap between the school's results and national standards is closing rapidly. There is purposeful activity in every class. The school has a significant number of pupils who are in local authority care and an increasing number who join the school unable to speak English. The consistent application of agreed procedures by teachers and teaching assistants, together with well-planned and effectively-delivered support programmes is enabling these groups of pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress in their social and academic development.

Pupils' formal speaking skills are a comparative weakness, but the overall improvement in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, together with their consideration for others, ability to work successfully in pairs and groups and their application when working independently, mean that their preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory overall. Attendance is improving gradually, though it remains broadly average.

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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	4
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	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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The atmosphere in classrooms is purposeful. Lessons proceed at a good pace and tasks effectively meet the needs of different pupils. Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, though this is not always consistent across year groups and, on some occasions, teachers' questioning does not sufficiently challenge pupils to develop their reasoning. Teachers give pupils opportunities to talk among themselves in pairs and groups and this increases pupil participation and self-confidence. However, the provision of opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking to the class and to make good use of newly-acquired vocabulary is less well developed. A strength of the school's provision is the quality of teachers' marking. Pupils are given clear advice about what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are expected to and do respond to teachers' written comments. High standards of presentation are expected and achieved. There is good written dialogue between teachers and pupils. For example, one teacher wrote in a pupil's literacy book, 'We will look at the features of a balanced argument this week.' In reply, the pupil wrote, 'Cool! I like balanced arguments.'

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. There is, of necessity, a strong emphasis on the improvement of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the school recognises that there is more to be done in the development of pupils' writing in a range of styles and for different purposes across the curriculum and in providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their formal speaking skills. The school has a specialist art and design teacher and the

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curriculum is enhanced by its art and design provision. There is much high quality art work on display around the school, and during the inspection several pupils received awards in school assembly for the quality of their art work. Another strength of the curriculum is provision for PE. As well as in PE lessons, organised activities take place at break and lunch times and large numbers of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils attend a wide range of extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils throughout the school are given good care, guidance and support. The school liaises very effectively with parents and carers, and with a range of support agencies, to ensure that pupils with specific needs and those who are potentially vulnerable receive good support to enable them to thrive at school. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are appropriate and understood by pupils. While attendance is average, the school does all it reasonably can to promote good attendance, including the use of incentives, as well as involving the local education welfare service in the few cases of low attendance. Admission arrangements and those for the transfer of pupils to secondary school are effective.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is clear in its ambition and is raising expectations and rapidly bringing about improvement in attainment throughout the school. The strong focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in a corresponding improvement in pupils' attainment and their rates of progress. The school's target-setting and pupil data tracking system is sophisticated and provides leaders and class teachers with accurate and up-to-date information about how well individuals and groups of pupils are performing. This information is used well by senior leaders to drive improvement. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively by senior leaders, though the roles of middle leaders and their impact on school improvement are less clearly defined. Structures for middle leaders to regularly monitor, evaluate and report on plans and policies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are in the early stages of development, largely because so many of them are relatively new in post. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, but the governing body's effectiveness is limited by the school's difficulty in recruiting a sufficient number of governors. The school has plans in place to remedy this situation.

The school engages with parents and carers very well. It has a growing number of partnerships that are benefiting pupils' well-being, though the impact of these partnerships on achievement is less evident. The school has clear and effective procedures

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for tackling any form of discrimination. It is a harmonious community and it promotes equal opportunity well, with the result that any gaps in performance between different groups are addressed effectively. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is a very cohesive community and it enjoys good links with local community organisations. The promotion of pupils' understanding of community cohesion at a global level is less well developed. Safeguarding procedures are effective. For example, risk assessment systems and first-aid procedures are thorough, accident and incident reporting systems are clear, the premises are very safe and secure and there is a sufficient number of suitably trained staff and governors.

These are the grades for 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	3
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	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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are organised in one Nursery and two Reception classes in two separate buildings. Nearly all the Nursery children attend part-time. From the outset, children learn and develop well in relation to their starting points. They are curious about the world around them and enjoy the wide range of stimulating activities and experiences provided for them. They behave well and concentrate for sustained periods, whether enjoying self-chosen activities or being taught in small groups by adults. They make good progress in the development of their speaking, and early reading and writing skills, though their overall attainment is still below average by the time they leave Reception. The highest attaining children can talk about what they are doing, such as clearly explaining the life cycle of a ladybird, and independently writing sentences such as, 'The ladybird has two wings.' Most of the oldest children can talk in short sentences about what they are doing. A small minority have speech and language difficulties, and their needs are being met well.

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There is a good balance between carefully planned adult-led activities that are designed to promote children's observation, enquiry and spoken language skills, and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Nursery children particularly enjoy serving refreshments in the 'Garden Cafe' and looking after the plants in their garden area. One boy named all the vegetables in the garden and told an inspector that, 'Plants need water and food to grow.' Adults model spoken language well, though on occasion there is an over-emphasis on teacher talk at the expense of the development of children's spoken language skills. The indoor and outdoor areas are well equipped and stimulating, though children in Reception have less freedom to go outside than those in Nursery. This is part of a strategy of providing structured activities to focus on and improve specific skills. Staff use observation and assessment activities well to plan the next steps in learning for children and promote progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. Staff work effectively as a team and children are kept safe. Monitoring has led to the identification of areas for development and provision has been enhanced as a result.

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 small minority of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Most of them stated that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Parents and carers feel that they are kept well informed and that the teaching is good. These views were similar to the findings of the inspection. Two concerns were raised. The first was about the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and second concerned how children's behaviour is rewarded. The inspection team investigated these concerns, including holding discussions with school leaders and with pupils. The team's findings are that procedures for promoting good behaviour and for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are appropriate and understood by pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wistaston Green Primary and Nursery 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 341 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	60	12	34	1	3	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	60	12	34	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	57	13	37	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	63	9	26	2	6	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	23	66	10	29	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	54	13	37	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	54	13	37	2	6	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)	18	51	13	37	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	60	9	26	2	6	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	43	14	40	4	11	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	49	15	43	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	20	57	12	34	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	63	11	31	1	3	1	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wistaston Green Primary and Nursery School, Crewe, CW2 8QS

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. You gave us a good understanding of what you think about your school. You told us that you feel safe at school and that you enjoy the many activities that are provided for you. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

Wistaston Green is a good school. Though many of you still have some catching up to do, your teachers and the other adults who help you are enabling you to make good progress in the development of your skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. We were impressed by your behaviour and your positive attitudes in lessons. We were also impressed by the quality of your art and design work and your keen participation in sports activities.

Your school can improve still further and we have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to do a number of things to help you achieve higher standards. These include to:

- give you more opportunities to talk formally in lessons and increase your use of vocabulary
- ensure that all adults use good questioning techniques to get you thinking
- give you wider opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different purposes.

We have also asked that the staff who have specific leadership responsibilities should more closely and systematically check and report on the quality of the teaching and your learning, to make sure that you continue to make at least good progress in all your work. It was pleasing to hear some of you say how important it is to attend school regularly and that if you do not come to school you are 'missing out'. We agree. We also hope that you will continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher

Lead inspector

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