

Warren Hills Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119981
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	291592
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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 on roll	165
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Smith
Headteacher	David Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003
School address	Stamford Drive Coalville LE67 4TA
Telephone number	01530 834030
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school on the edge of the town, serves an estate on which there is some very significant deprivation. This is reflected in the much higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Boys outnumber girls appreciably. There are far more pupils than one would expect with learning difficulties. The proportion with statements of their special needs is more than three times the national average and most of these have behavioural difficulties. Almost all pupils are White British, the others representing a variety of other heritages. Almost all speak English at home. The headteacher has been on sickness leave since just after the start of this term and the school is currently been run by the deputy headteacher, aided by a representative of the local authority. Three of the six classes had new teachers in September 2006. A children's centre, attached to the school, was opened in September 2004 and this contains day care provision and a SureStart nursery.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. A small minority of pupils start at the school with behavioural problems and limited social skills. The school does well to create an orderly haven, where pupils, many of whom are from significantly deprived backgrounds, thoroughly enjoy school and their learning. Pupils are keen to say that they feel safe in school. Although some pupils find self-control difficult and there are instances of bullying, almost all pupils regard these incidents as being dealt with well by staff.

Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory and these children are making satisfactory progress. Although progress in the key areas of social development and the gaining of language and number skills is sometimes good, opportunities are missed to reinforce these skills. Children's skills and knowledge when they start in the Reception class have improved considerably since the opening of the SureStart nursery. Progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below average. This satisfactory progress is largely due to satisfactory teaching. There are strengths in teaching, particularly in the strategies that teachers use to prevent poor behaviour affecting the learning of the class. However, teachers do not provide a wide enough range of work in English and mathematics and other subjects for the different abilities in their classes often enough. This particularly affects the more able who are not always sufficiently challenged. Assessment is not sufficiently well used to inform planning for individual needs. The curriculum is satisfactory. The needs of the mixed age classes have been carefully considered although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.

Pastoral support and guidance are good. All adults take good care of pupils and a wide range of experts are brought in to help and advise, particularly on how best to help pupils with difficulties. Parents say that they appreciate the care that is provided for their children and that this care often extends to the whole family. There are also close relationships with a group of local schools. Projects, led by the upper school, are very fruitful in improving pupils' literacy skills and their enthusiasm for education. Systems to measure pupils' progress are not being used to set clear targets so that teachers and pupils know what pupils need to learn next. These weaknesses in academic support and guidance mean that care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with some strengths. For example, an externally run survey showed that pupils really enjoy school. They make a good contribution to the local community, through such things as performing puppet shows in local pre-schools and the hospital. Attendance is well below average and has declined appreciably over the last two years. Strategies to reverse this decline have not yet improved the situation much.

Most of the teachers are fairly new to the school and these changes have hampered some strategies to improve pupils' progress. Part of the reason for this is that many school procedures and systems are not fully recorded or shared. For example, although there is a very good program on the computer system to check on how well pupils are doing, too few staff are aware of this and how it can help them improve pupils' progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a rather rosy view of its own effectiveness but, with the improvements made in recent years, it is satisfactorily placed to continue to make progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics and in other subjects by ensuring that teachers always provide a range of work to meet the needs of the varying abilities in their classes.
- Use the systems of assessment more effectively to better meet individual needs and so that teachers and pupils always know how pupils can improve their work.
- Ensure that all management procedures and systems are clearly recorded and shared so that all staff can play their part in monitoring and improving provision.
- Improve attendance by monitoring it more closely and putting in place procedures to help families understand the importance of regular attendance. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children now start in the Reception class with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress. In the past, levels of skills and knowledge were exceptionally low. The pupils currently in Year 1, the first who benefited from the SureStart nursery provision, made satisfactory progress in Reception and almost reached expected levels by the time they finished their Reception Year. In contrast, levels of skills and knowledge for pupils in Year 2 were exceptionally low on entry but they too made satisfactory progress in Reception with well below expected levels by the time they started in Year 1.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory through the school and they make steady progress from Year 1 to Year 6. As year groups are quite small, standards vary from year to year, but they are below average by the time pupils leave. Pupils with learning difficulties make the same progress as their classmates. They have effective plans for their progress and are well supported. Despite the greater numbers of boys, girls do not miss out on any opportunities and make the same progress as boys. Some pupils with behavioural difficulties do not make the expected progress, despite the best efforts of the staff, as their difficulties hinder their learning. A small minority of pupils have poor attendance records and this affects their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although there are not enough opportunities for them to understand a range of cultures. Behaviour is satisfactory and this makes a significant contribution to the school's welcoming and usually peaceful atmosphere. Pupils appreciate their good relationships with each other and with adults. What gives many pupils particular pleasure are the good opportunities they are given to undertake responsibilities in the school and the wider community. Although the school has put in place a number of strategies to emphasise the importance of regular attendance, and is checking more carefully the reasons for absence, this is too recent to have had enough impact on a minority of pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that they are well prepared to keep safe out of school. They understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the opportunities for physical activity which they are given in school. Their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet is developing, but this is not consistently reflected in the contents of their lunchboxes. Pupils' involvement in fund-raising activities and the development of their basic skills of literacy and numeracy are helping to prepare them for their future satisfactorily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers create a calm and orderly working atmosphere in their classes. This is due to the good relationships between pupils and adults and ensures that pupils are keen to work and do their best. Behaviour is managed well and teaching assistants play a full role in this, often nipping potential disruption in the bud by skilfully engaging the attention of potential troublemakers. Teachers provide a good range of activities to interest their pupils, so pupils are keen to be involved. Although they provide work for different abilities, the range is sometimes too narrow. This particularly affects the more able, who are not always challenged sufficiently, especially in English and mathematics. Assessment of individual needs is not always sufficiently well used to inform planning. Teachers do not always share the objective for the lesson with pupils and then return to it and pupils therefore cannot easily evaluate the success of their learning. This also extends to marking where, although it is often encouraging and positive, pointers to help pupils improve their work are sometimes insufficiently precise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Careful plans are made to ensure that, as mixed age classes are unavoidable, pupils do not repeat work and are able to build on skills progressively. However, this planned curriculum does not always take into account the needs of the range of abilities of pupils. Links are beginning to be developed between subjects in order to give pupils the opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, although this is in its early stages and is not yet improving pupils' progress. There are good arrangements to enrich pupils' experience of school and widen their horizons. Pupils particularly enjoy the visits organised to extend their learning in subjects such as history. They especially appreciate the opportunity for regular swimming lessons throughout the school. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular clubs and other activities, such as caring for the school animals, which pupils enjoy and which benefit their learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Every effort is made to meet the diverse personal needs of the pupils and this caring attitude results in the generally calm and orderly atmosphere. In particular, the nurture unit provides a safe and supportive back-up for pupils who find self-control difficult. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are appropriate. Some good systems are in place to check on pupils' progress. For example, a new system has been introduced to record the levels pupils reach each term. However, this system is too new to have resulted in improved pupils' progress. Other systems are used inconsistently and are not all shared so that staff do not have an overview of progress through the school. In particular, systems are not yet being used to set clear targets for pupils. Although pupils know the levels they are working at and some general targets, they do not know clearly what it is they need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership has established clear priorities and has correctly determined behaviour management as very important. Successful strategies have been put in place and the school is now a peaceful place. There have been a number of changes of staff and governors in the recent past and management systems are not yet fully embedded. Monitoring procedures are satisfactory and form a sound basis on which to judge the school's effectiveness. However, new staff have not yet had an opportunity to have a systematic input into school self-evaluation. Part of the reason for this is that a great deal of management time has been taken up establishing the children's centre. This development is already having an impact, which shows in children's improved skills when they start at the school as well as meeting wider community needs. The successful focus on behaviour also takes up a lot of management time and this is reducing the effectiveness of management in other areas.

Governors are keen and supportive and many new governors have received appropriate training. However, their role as 'critical friend' is not so well developed and, although they have a well defined role in monitoring, they do not have sufficient input into self-evaluation. A weakness in leadership and management is that too little information is shared. Key staff are not aware of important procedures as these have not been sufficiently recorded and such records as there are, are not readily available.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Warren Hills Community Primary School, Coalville, LE67 4TA

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school this week. Mrs Walker and I enjoyed meeting you, seeing how hard you are working and hearing how much you enjoy school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

The main things we found about your school are:

- you do a lot to help in school and the local community. Your puppet shows in pre-schools and the hospital are good examples of this
- you are making satisfactory progress as teaching is satisfactory, but the standard of your work is below average
- although most of you behave well, some do not so behaviour is only satisfactory overall
- all adults take good care of you but do not always tell you clearly enough how you can improve your work
- a lot of thought has been put into making sure you do not repeat work if you stay in the same class for two years, but you are not given enough opportunities to practise your English and mathematics skills in other subjects
- your headteacher and the staff are keen to make the school better but plans to do this are not always clearly set out.

We have suggested that the following things should be improved.

- Some of you who find work easy are not given difficult work often enough.
- You are not always told clearly enough how you can improve your work.
- Your headteacher and staff do not always put down on paper and talk to each other enough about things that would help the school improve.
- Some of you do not come to school regularly enough and so are not learning as well as you could.

With best wishes for the future and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

John D Eadie Lead inspector