

Western Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121399
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	363936
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Katharine Halifax

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	486
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Brooke
Headteacher	Cheryl Smith
Date of previous school inspection	09 June 2008
School address	Cold Bath Road Harrogate HG2 0NA
Telephone number	01423 502737
Fax number	01423 566603
Email address	admin@western.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons taught by 15 different teachers and observed two teaching assistants. Further time was spent looking at pupils' records, workbooks, and information about pupils' progress. Inspectors held meetings with leaders, governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers, and other professionals. They looked at the school's review of its work, the current development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and documentation to ensure pupils are safe. The responses to 134 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of methods that are used to eradicate gender differences in attainment.
- The effectiveness of actions that are taken to narrow the gap in attainment between reading and writing.
- The effectiveness of methods that are used to raise attainment and progress in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of leaders' actions to identify and provide for pupils who are gifted or talented.
- The depth of pupils' understanding of diversity and community cohesion.

Information about the school

Though situated close to the town centre, almost one fifth of pupils at this larger-than-average primary school attend from out of the area. This includes a number of pupils from service families. The vast majority of pupils are of White British or European heritage, with a small proportion being African, Asian or of mixed heritage. Most speak English as their principal language at home. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The governing body provides before- and after-school care for children in the Nursery, but older pupils attend the privately-run 'Kids at Heart' club. This private provision was not subject to this inspection. The school has achieved many awards including the Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Healthy Schools status and the Dyslexia Quality 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 that has equality of opportunity at the heart of its work. It lives up to its aim of 'Creating Success Stories' for pupils of all abilities, and in ensuring they acquire skills such as problem-solving, team-building and working collaboratively through the school-based initiative to ensure 'Effective Learning Forever' (ELF). By making excellent use of connections with a number of schools, professionals and community groups, pupils are helped to flourish academically and socially, and to gain memorable experiences during their time in school.

Achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery class with attainment typical for their age and make good progress overall during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 also make good progress. Attainment has risen year-on-year since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average overall. It is well above average in reading and in science but in writing it is broadly average. Leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to raise attainment in writing at all key stages, but there is still a considerable gap between pupils' attainment in writing and that in reading. As a result of the school's focus on improving attainment in mathematics, attainment in this subject is rising with more than one half of Year 6 pupils currently attaining the higher National Curriculum Level 5. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is high. The animation and music in a multi-media presentation of 'Antarctica' was of a high quality and pupils derived huge satisfaction from designing a video game.

Leaders have successfully created a school that embraces all learners and has a number of outstanding features. Regardless of background, pupils thrive. As a consequence of the good, and often outstanding, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, they make great strides in their personal growth. Equally, the outstanding pastoral care and guidance pupils receive is reflected in their high attendance, and excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school, local and wider community. They are justifiably proud of their support for a school in Kenya but their understanding of the beliefs of other world faiths is more limited than other aspects of their cultural development.

Leaders know the school well and have a proven track record of improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate. They are clear about what they do well and what needs to be

done to raise attainment further. Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have good capacity to continue to raise pupils' attainment and drive school improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to match the well above average attainment in reading by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - improving pupils' spelling and sentence structure
 - taking full advantage of opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary
 - ensuring that targets set when marking pupils' work are followed up.

- Further extend pupils' cultural development by increasing pupils' understanding of the beliefs and traditions of the world's major faiths.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and were exceptionally keen to tell inspectors of the abundance of exciting activities available to them. They are polite, bright and cheerful and are gaining the skills which prepare them well for their future life. The behaviour of the vast majority is impeccable and a major factor in the progress they make. On a handful of occasions, however, when the pace of lessons slows, a very small minority of pupils find concentration difficult so their rate of learning slows.

Pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Leaders keep a close eye on how different groups perform. This has enabled them to introduce initiatives to eradicate the differences in the attainment of boys and girls. While there have been considerable differences in the past, the gap is narrowing and boys now make similar progress to that of girls over the key stage. In the 2010 teacher assessments in mathematics, fewer pupils than predicted made the expected two levels progress in Key Stage 2. A focus on practical and mental mathematics alongside setting pupils by ability, and additional staff in Years 2 and 6 have resulted in significant improvement in attainment and progress in mathematics. Pupils love reading; many devour books, but they do not all write to a high standard. While pupils write in different genres, and for a variety of purposes in different subjects, their sentences sometimes lack structure and spelling is not always accurate. Neither do they have sufficient opportunities to write at length. Furthermore, too many older pupils are not joining their letters. Throughout the school, there is no significant difference in the performance of pupils from different backgrounds, or of pupils of different capabilities. Pupils who are gifted make good progress, for example the attainment of gifted mathematicians is increased through their work with a local secondary school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress.

Pupils are proud of their achievements and undertake their numerous responsibilities conscientiously. They take the initiative, efficiently organising themselves and others when operating, for example, as 'stair monitors' or 'play squad' leaders. Through their understanding of ELF, they express their views with confidence and identify the

skills they are using. Pupils make a considerable contribution to the school and local community, for example by planting bulbs in a nearby park, and their work with an allotment association. Despite their outward-looking approach and interest in other communities, their understanding of the major world faiths and their traditions is not as strong as other aspects of their cultural development. Pupils love a challenge. Following a visit to a countryside fair, they savoured the challenges presented by farmers using skills to, for example, design and make a structure to prevent foxes stealing chickens and eggs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff work very effectively as a team and have an in-depth knowledge of the abilities and needs of all pupils. They plan conscientiously to provide and challenge the different abilities in each class. Teachers are imaginative in the activities they provide, particularly in endeavouring to inspire boys to write. For example, arriving in school one morning, pupils were stunned to see their classroom seemingly 'trashed'. Following the necessary 'enquiries', they produced detailed vivid newspaper accounts of the 'burglary'. Teachers are skilled in questioning pupils to make them think and reason. Some very good examples were observed of adults extending pupils' vocabulary by asking for 'wow' words, but opportunities were missed for pupils to provide imaginative vocabulary or to use similes, metaphors or alliteration to make their writing more interesting. Assessment is good and accurate. Teachers mark pupils' books providing 'signposts' to help pupils improve their work. However, on some occasions, these are not followed up so pupils continue to make the same errors.

The imaginative curriculum is tailored to individual needs. It motivates pupils and engages them very well with learning. Suitable time is allocated to literacy and numeracy. Setting by ability for mathematics is raising attainment and plans are well-advanced to do this for literacy in the next school year. Leaders have been innovative in their '21st Century Curriculum' and have introduced themes that have

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

inspired pupils. Pupils were positively animated as they recalled topics such as 'volcanoes', astutely commenting however, that they would have preferred to have used lemon juice rather than vinegar to elicit the explosion because 'it stank'. Pupils also appreciate being consulted as to the way topics will develop to match their interests. Numerous visits and visitors make learning meaningful. Despite having a very small playground, pupils participate in a wealth of sporting activities. Very good provision is made for pupils who are gifted, and the creative curriculum enables pupils with a talent to be identified and extended through various partnerships. Adults work alongside parents and carers in endeavouring to provide '101 things to do before you are twelve'. Pupils sparkled as they listed memorable experiences such as baking bread and eating it warm, and making a 'snow angel'.

All pupils benefit from very good relationships with adults. They receive outstanding support from caring, approachable adults who they trust. This enhances the quality of their learning. Exceptional arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare of the most vulnerable. Very good links with a range of health professionals and agencies contribute to the well-being of all pupils. The provision of the quiet room plays a significant part in promoting pupils' emotional well-being and in providing targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils and those experiencing difficulties in their personal life. Transition between key stages and to secondary education is particularly well-planned giving pupils confidence and enabling a smooth transfer.

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?

Leaders are clear and determined in their pursuit of excellence and have the skill and enthusiasm to achieve it. Their vision and expertise has resulted in a school whose common aims, understanding and culture are evident in its orderly, harmonious community. Leaders recognise every pupil and member of staff as an individual. They work relentlessly to ensure outstanding equality of opportunity so individual and group needs are met through staff training and additional resources. Very good professional development has raised the quality of teaching, pupils' attainment and equipped staff to meet the requirements of pupils with more complex needs. Recognising that the school has a high proportion of vulnerable pupils, finance was secured for building alterations. As a result, imaginative changes to the accommodation have enabled the individual needs of pupils to be catered for in literacy and numeracy. This is paying dividends not only in their academic achievement, but also in their emotional development. Similar arrangements are in place for the more-able enabling them to work at a much faster pace.

Governance is good. Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school and hold leaders to account, particularly for financial matters and in demonstrating value for money. They take their responsibilities seriously, especially

in ensuring the health and well-being of pupils and staff. At the time of the inspection, good arrangements were in place to safeguard pupils. Adults have a good understanding of protecting their pupils. Community cohesion is good. A rigorous check has been carried out to ensure the school provides all the required elements. Leaders have undertaken considerable work to ensure pupils understand what is expected of them. Much of this has been highly successful, particularly within the local community. Pupils understand their role as good citizens. As a result of its rigorous checking, the school has now put clear plans in place to further promote pupils' understanding of communities different from their own.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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 enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good variety of learning opportunities that are carefully-matched to their individual needs. By the end of their year in the Reception class, almost all children attain the expected levels in most areas of learning with many attaining above in particular areas. Children's progress is good overall. It is outstanding in their personal and social development. Recognising that boys did not achieve as well as girls in writing, and tapping into their interest in the emergency services, activities around fighting fires and building fire engines have captured the interest of boys and have been successful in extending their vocabulary and improving their writing. Teaching is good with a suitable balance between adult-led and child-centred activities both indoors and out that cater well for children's learning. Observations of children's achievements are recorded well and used to plan further work. Records kept in the children's 'Learning Journeys' are exceptionally well-organised and demonstrate the excellent links with parents and carers. Children have a good understanding of keeping safe and healthy. They wash their hands and choose healthy snacks without prompting. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. As in the main body of the school, the arrangements for pastoral care are outstanding. Parents of nursery age children particularly appreciate the well-run before- and after-school provision.

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

Just over one quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is a lower proportion than typical in primary schools. The majority of parents and carers chose to make comments, many were positive. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the warm atmosphere of the school, adults who genuinely care, and the encouragement given to their children in all aspects of their education. Others reported areas of concern. The inspection team endorses the strengths identified by parents and carers. In response to their concerns:

Staff changes: A few parents and carers expressed concern about the number of teachers their children had been taught by over the year. While there have been staff changes, leaders have endeavoured to maintain continuity through support staff, and there has been minimum impact on progress in most classes.

Communication: The school provides a wide range of informative newsletters and reports, which notify parents and carers of the progress their children are making, and of how they may help with their children's learning.

Meeting particular needs: Leaders provide personalised learning for all pupils. This ensures that all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who learn more slowly and those who are more able receive a suitably challenging curriculum.

Spelling: Some pupils could do better with their spelling. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 do not receive spelling homework.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Western 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 134 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 486 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	63	45	34	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	63	47	35	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	37	67	50	15	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	40	67	50	9	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	71	53	61	46	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	43	63	47	11	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	48	60	45	7	5	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)	65	49	62	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	42	64	48	11	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	34	65	49	8	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	31	71	53	8	6	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	69	51	55	41	5	4	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	59	49	37	2	1	2	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 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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and is 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 up 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.



15 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Western Primary School, Harrogate, HG2 0NA

Firstly may I say what an enjoyable time my colleagues and I had when we visited your school recently. Thank you for talking to us and for showing us your work. We especially enjoyed hearing about how ELF is helping you make progress, your success in the 'Master Chef' competition, and all about your production 'Generation'. It was very clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies that we received from you, and from your parents and carers that you enjoy school, and think that you are safe and very well cared for.

Your school is providing you with a good education. Your teachers have high expectations of your behaviour and the work you produce. They teach interesting lessons and provide exceptional care, support and guidance. As a result, standards are rising and you are achieving especially well in reading, science and ICT. You are well-behaved and your attendance is high. You have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy, and you make a remarkable contribution to the school and wider community.

Your leaders are working successfully to make the school better for you. There are two things we have asked them to do to make it even more successful.

- We would like to see your attainment in writing match that in reading.
- We would like you to have a better understanding of the beliefs and traditions of other world faiths.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Katharine Halifax
Lead inspector

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