

Waterloo Primary Academy

Waterloo Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 3AG

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a very welcoming and caring school. Lessons are fun and pupils have a joy of learning. Pupils are proud of their school; one pupil stated, 'I love school so much I hate weekends.'
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good and improving progress from starting points when they join school that are well below expectations for their ages.
- Pupils who receive help funded by the pupil premium, pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, including those with a hearing impairment, make good progress. The most able pupils are well catered for so they reach the higher levels.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and thrive in a caring and stimulating environment.
- Teaching is good. Interesting and stimulating lessons motivate pupils who usually work hard and try their best.
- An outstanding range of activities enhances all aspects of learning. Pupils have access to excellent opportunities to learn outdoors and to participate in sports and arts events.
- Behaviour is good and creates a very harmonious community. Pupils respect each other and say that almost all of the time everyone gets on well together. The school works hard to secure good levels of pupils' safety. Pupils know how to manage risk and stay safe.
- Very effective leadership by the headteacher and senior staff in this improving school gets the best out of staff. They feel valued and trusted.
- Middle leaders make a strong contribution to the school's success by managing colleagues and checking on the quality of teaching and learning to bring about continued improvement.
- The governing body supports leaders well and holds them to account; where success is evident it provides financial rewards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make fast enough progress in writing. They are not given enough guidance to enable them to write with flair. Some are not sure about what to do to improve.
- The school's work to measure how well it is doing is not precise enough in defining how well it is achieving its targets. This holds back some aspects of the school's improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in all classes. They observed one assembly, 20 lessons and pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, in the playground and at lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including supervision and support for pupils who need extra help. They listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for the school's future development, the school's use of sports premium and pupil premium funding, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how the quality of teaching is checked and information about the achievement and progress of pupils across the school.
- The views of parents were taken into account through taking note of the 28 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions with a number of parents.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 26 staff members.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nina Heron

Additional Inspector

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Jeremy Barnes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is twice the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around three times the national average.
- There is a high turnover of pupils, with an above-average number joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has additional funding for supporting pupils with a statement of special education needs for hearing impairment. During the inspection, three pupils were being funded for this support with one pupil being present.
- Waterloo Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in August 2012. When its predecessor school Waterloo Community Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- Since September 2013, three additional teachers have been employed in Key Stage 2 to boost support for literacy. In addition, a specialist teacher for mathematics has been employed to give support to the most able mathematicians.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing pupils with clear and regular guidance about how they can improve their work to reach higher standards
 - giving pupils better support and guidance so that they develop their ability to write with flair and imagination.
- Accelerate further the school's rate of improvement by developing more precise details of the criteria for measuring the success of the school's actions in meeting its targets for improvement and in turn be able to inform all leaders and staff of the school's progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well at Waterloo Primary Academy. While standards in 2013 at Year 6 were below average, inspection evidence indicates that due to swift actions by senior leaders and staff, progress is accelerating quickly and most pupils are working at standards that are close to the expectations for their age. Given their starting points to school, and the considerable barriers to learning of many pupils, this equates to good achievement and is testimony to the strong and clear-sighted leadership that is driving the academy forwards
- Most children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are much lower than typical for their age. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes. Their personal and emotional development improves particularly quickly due to the very good teaching and provision they receive. Many children also make rapid advancements in their speech and language skills. This good improvement is not enough however to make up the significant deficits of many children when they start school. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of pupils with good levels of development has improved noticeably but is still below average.
- In Key Stage 1, progress continues at a good rate for all groups of pupils. The gap between the pupils' performance and the national average narrows at a good rate but standards overall are still below average at the end of Year 2.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted well. In the 2013 phonics screening check (linking sounds and letters), the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected level was average. Currently, Year 2 pupils are making good progress in developing their reading skills, using their phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words and understand the books provided for them.
- The large turnover of pupils, the low starting points of some pupils and the high proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs adversely affects results figures in national assessments. In 2013, each of these factors contributed to standards at Year 6 being below average.
- Robust data held by the school and checked for accuracy by other professionals in education, combined with the observations and information gathered during the inspection, indicates that progress across Key Stage 2 is good. In the current Year 6, the gap between the pupils' standards and those expected for their age is closing rapidly. Standards are moving closer to average in reading, writing and mathematics but progress in writing is slower than reading and mathematics.
- The school is successfully increasing the percentage of pupils gaining a higher level in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, the most able readers are fluent and expressive. They are able to explore the plot and characters to develop their understanding of texts. Decisions to employ additional staff to create an extra class for literacy and numeracy in most year groups are successfully raising achievement. The proportion of pupils working at levels that exceed expectations for their age is increasing rapidly, most noticeably in mathematics and reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those receiving specifically tailored help for hearing impairment, receive high quality support from skilled staff. The progress they make towards their individual targets is good and their inclusion in school life is excellent.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium do very well. In 2013, the performance of such pupils was two to three terms behind others. Since then, the gap has closed rapidly; their current attainment is close to that of other pupils in the school and better than that of such pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The teaching team works tirelessly to help pupils overcome what for many are considerable barriers to learning. The pupils gain self-belief and learn with enjoyment without the fear of

making mistakes. Pupils rate the care of staff highly and say it is something that helps them to feel safe and secure in school.

- Teachers show great energy and enthusiasm for their jobs. There is a shared confidence and desire to try out new ideas and a willingness to recognise where they can do even better. Staff understand the specific needs of the pupils in the school and the circumstances of the community in which they live. This has triggered an imaginative approach to the way subjects are taught and a determination to widen the pupils' horizons.
- The team combines teachers and support staff that, between them, possesses a wide range of skills which make learning enjoyable. Staff give considerable time over and above the norm to help their pupils. For example, writing sessions are provided before school officially starts, homework clubs are organised and all staff contribute in some way to the outstanding range of extra activities provided for four evenings a week.
- The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Working as teams, teachers in each year group make sure that all pupils in each year group have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. They make sure that the most able pupils are given work that takes them to higher levels while pupils who need extra support, for example those with disabilities and special educational needs, receive support that is just right for their needs. Staff employed to teach pupils with hearing impairment provide high-quality support. Such pupils access all aspects of the curriculum and are included in all elements of school life.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very good. Tasks are well structured and interesting activities contribute successfully to children's development in all areas. Skilled and effective teaching assistants have a secure understanding of their role and are effective in supporting pupils and guiding learning across the school.
- The skilful use of questions helps pupils to extend their thinking and learning. Marking is regular and completed swiftly after pupils have done their work. Often written comments give pupils clear pointers about what they need to do to improve.
- In writing, much is being done to enable pupils to develop good basic writing skills. However, pupils do not always have enough support and guidance to write with flair, originality and creativity. Pupils are not always aware of how they can raise their standard of written work. This holds back the learning for some pupils, particularly the most able. Reading is taught well and mathematics is carefully planned to enable pupils to work at the correct level for their ability.
- Excellent outdoor teaching skills make an outstanding impact on each pupil's personal and academic development. Sports coaches motivate and inspire pupils to participate in a variety of sports, and staff with skills in Spanish, French and Mandarin Chinese enable pupils to learn languages other than English.
- Many parents say that homework is very effective. All pupils talked with enthusiasm about the home-based work they complete called 'Learning Logs' and in many cases their work impressed the inspectors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The very large majority of parents say that behaviour is good and that levels of care are exemplary. The view of one parent typifies that of most by stating that, 'There is clear and consistent behaviour management through clever, sensitive and structured teaching.' This has a good effect on pupils' learning in school and also in the way pupils behave at home.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. This and contributes to the good learning in classes. Pupils take pride in their books and wear their uniform with pride. The decision of the school to introduce a sports kit bearing the school logo has boosted pupils' confidence and pride in taking part in physical activity. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions; they respond very well to the school's system in which good actions can lead to merits and then badges and certificates.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and take heed of the school's message of respecting their own and others' rights. They have a mature view of others of different backgrounds and say that 'everyone is our friend'. Teasing or bullying occurs occasionally but pupils say they trust staff to

support them and remove its causes. In many lessons, behaviour is outstanding but there are occasions out of lessons when pupils are over energetic and mildly disruptive.

- The large majority of pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are proud of the school and enjoy learning a wide range of skills and knowledge. The pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances benefit from very skilled teachers and support staff. Occasionally such pupils do not concentrate well in lessons, and their learning slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school is a secure site where pupils feel free from harassment. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including discrimination and prejudice-based bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and understand how to stay safe. Pupils are developing an advanced understanding for their age of managing personal safety through the many challenges they get when learning outdoors. Their opportunities to climb, walk, scramble and abseil in extremely safe circumstances builds each pupils' confidence and ability to keep themselves safe.
- The large majority of pupils attend school regularly. The appointment of an attendance officer minimises the number of pupils who are persistently absent by working with families in a supportive way.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides highly effective, inspirational leadership for the school. With the constant support from the governing body, he has built a strong staff team and created an alternative approach to the curriculum, which inspires pupils. There is an energy and vigour across the school which is increasingly improving pupils' behaviour, attitudes and academic achievement
- Precise priorities for improvement are identified and action is swiftly taken to bring about change. Senior leaders have a crystal clear idea of where the school is going and are successfully raising standards and improving the lives of the pupils and their families.
- 'This is a fantastic school where staff and pupils are happy and feel valued' is a comment written by a member of staff and given to inspectors. It reflects the views of staff and demonstrates the very high staff morale that pervades the school. Everyone shares the same ambition for the school. They all unite in working together to achieve the school's aim of giving pupils the best start to life.
- The transition to a primary academy has been very successful. Every member of staff knows the part they play in its success. Staff trust the leadership of the headteacher who in turn trusts them to work towards their agreed aims. Staff are very pleased with how their performance is managed; they value the guidance and help they receive in meeting their performance targets and improving their expertise through opportunities for further training.
- An extremely effective management team is established. Senior leaders secure the academic and personal development of pupils. Middle leaders, with responsibility for each year group, willingly manage the quality of all that goes on in each class.
- All leaders have a realistic view of the school and a clear understanding of where it needs to improve. However, the school's documentation that records how well it is performing is not succinct enough. It does not state clearly how it measures its success in achieving its targets and against what criteria. This reduces the ability of leaders to check on whether all of its actions to improve the school are being successful.
- A highly skilled business manager secures considerable savings that release funds to employ extra staff for the pupils' benefit. For example, savings in switching some school contracts has enabled the employment of a specialist mathematics teacher to work with the most able pupils in Key Stage 2 and to employ staff with speech and language skills to work in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Pupils learn a broad range of well planned subjects through engaging and interesting topics that give pupils good opportunities for them to apply their literacy skills and use computer

technology. Investments in the two school mini-buses, and employing staff with excellent outdoor teaching skills, benefit pupils immensely. An exceptional array of educational visits gives learners of all ages wonderful experiences of the wider world. Their access to learning in the outdoors is outstanding and inspirational for pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to develop good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The school uses the primary school sports funding to provide additional specialist sports coaches and to increase the range of after-school clubs. This is enabling more pupils to participate and broaden the range of their sporting activities. Clear plans are in place to check the effect of the funding on how well pupils do.
- Constructive partnerships with other academy schools and with a wide range of support services for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs benefit pupils and provide good opportunities for staff training.
- The school works very hard to encourage parents to involve themselves in their children's education, many of whom support their child's learning at home. The very large majority of parents are very happy with the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides extremely clear direction to the work of the school. Governors are committed to raising pupils' achievement from good to outstanding. Some visit the school regularly and question the school leaders about what and how well pupils are learning. External reports enable them to corroborate their own findings and ensure that they have high-quality information about the quality of teaching.
 - Governors undertake regular training and check data on school performance thoroughly. They are well aware of how this information is used to reward teachers for good performance or to indicate where professional development may be required. They ensure that the information on school performance is linked closely to the performance management of the headteacher. Where a member of staff achieves significant success, the governors reward this with a financial bonus.
 - Governors check regularly upon the effect of specific funding such as the pupil premium and primary sports grant. They understand how the additional opportunities paid for by the new sports grant are increasing participation in sport and promoting healthy lifestyles. They are checking that the training for staff will sustain this in the future.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138300
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	427369

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	672
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie Collett
Headteacher	Mark Gray
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2011
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