

# Two Waters Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117108
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379351
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jennie Witter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Maykels
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	High Ridge Close Apsley Hemel Hempstead HP3 0AU
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 25 lessons and part-lessons taught by nine teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, the school's website, leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 113 pupils, 24 staff, and 137 parents and carers.

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

- What is the reason for the dip in outcomes in mathematics in 2011 and have standards risen again?
- To what extent has the rise in standards since the last inspection been mirrored by other improved outcomes?
- Are there features of provision that stand out at this school?

## Information about the school

This is an average-size school. The large majority of pupils are White British, with small numbers coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. None are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than seen nationally. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Two Waters has an ActiveMark and silver Eco-Schools awards, as well as Healthy Schools status. The school offers an extended school day through breakfast and after-school clubs.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has been transformed since the last inspection. At that time, the school had been through a succession of short-term leaders and standards had drifted. Since then, attainment has steadily risen. Pupils in the Year 6 class last year were unsettled by unplanned changes of teachers shortly before the national tests. This caused a dip in results in mathematics. Standards in English and mathematics, in both Key Stages 1 and 2, have otherwise been consistently high. They are equally high for pupils in the current Year 6. As in 2010, almost all are on track to attain the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics, and rather more than half are expected to attain the higher Level 5. Boys and girls achieve exceptionally well; pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress. This reflects the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, which is consistently good or better. Thanks to the high quality of care, guidance and support, pupils' personal development is also outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are eager to learn. It is part of the philosophy of the school, and a feature of almost all lessons, that pupils are encouraged to push themselves to try more challenging tasks. Teachers routinely plan a range of activities of varying levels of challenge, but pupils rarely choose the easy option; they are keen to stretch themselves, and not just because they know that staff will steer them to another choice.

Parents and carers have certainly noticed the change for the better at Two Waters. As one explained, 'I was a disgruntled parent at the last inspection but the school is now very different.' Parents and carers are in no doubt over where credit should be given for the school's improvement. Another commented: 'The headteacher has brought great stability to the school, leads from the top and is very supportive to both children and parents.' Pupils benefit from a highly stimulating curriculum aimed at developing their independence and their thinking skills, and which offers them exceptional opportunities to excel across a wide range of subjects. Again, this is aptly summed up by a parent, who wrote, 'This is a creative nurturing school with lots of music and outdoor learning, yet it still manages to achieve great results.' Pupils are given good guidance through marking that generally shows them how they can improve their work, but this is better in English than in other subjects, and it is not of a consistently high standard in every class.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly settle and they enjoy their time at school but, for some, the day is too structured, limiting opportunities for learning through purposeful play. The school has trialled a succession of systems for assessing children in the Nursery, and leaders acknowledge that the lack of

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established assessment arrangements has adversely affected their planning of activities that ensure children are always able to build on what they have learnt before. From starting points that are generally above those expected for their ages, children make satisfactory progress but relatively few attain the highest early learning levels at the end of the Reception Year.

Self-evaluation is sharply accurate in this exceptionally well-run school. The many changes for the better since the last inspection in almost all aspects of provision and in pupils' outcomes amply demonstrate this school's outstanding capacity for sustained further improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By the start of the autumn term 2012, accelerate progress and further raise attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially for more-able children, by:
  - ensuring that assessment arrangements in the nursery best identify how children can be helped to build on what they have already learnt
  - providing more informal opportunities throughout the day for children to develop their emerging literacy and numeracy skills through activities they choose for themselves.
- By the end of the spring term 2012, ensure that marking in all subjects and in every class gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

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

**1**

Standards in English and mathematics have been high in all but one of the last three years and they are high for pupils currently at the school. This represents good and, often, outstanding progress for boys and girls of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils benefit from very carefully tailored support that helps them to make rapid progress in relation to their specific needs and for almost all to reach the levels expected for their ages. Key factors in pupils' good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 are teachers' high expectations and the routine question posed to pupils asking them: 'Have you challenged yourself today?' There is a strong focus in both key stages on developing pupils' thinking skills, and facilitating them to become independent learners. This is less evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where activities are sometimes too regimented.

Pupils develop as confident, articulate young people who get on very well with each other and show a keen interest in their own and other cultures. They are enthusiastic, for example, about the opportunities they have had to write to pupils in schools in France and South Africa. Pupils from different backgrounds mix and play very well together. Pupils' very well developed basic skills and high attendance rate prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. They have an excellent appreciation of how to keep safe at school, when on the roads and when

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using the internet, and they have a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, both within the school and in the locality, for example as part of their ecology work. Year 6 ‘buddy’ with Reception children, to the benefit of both, and the choir is prominently involved in events out in the local community.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Pupils make consistently good and better progress in their learning because teachers’ expectations are high. As a parent put it, ‘The children relish the challenges offered to them.’ Teachers make good use of assessment information to set work that always challenges pupils to extend themselves, although the feedback to pupils through marking varies in quality. Much, particularly in English, give pupils clear guidance on how to move their work on. This is not the case, however, in all classes and in every subject. Too often, the questions that teachers pose when they mark pupils’ work go unanswered. Questioning in lessons is of high order; teachers routinely challenge pupils to explain and expand upon their answers and help them to develop their thinking skills. Teaching assistants provide very good support in lessons, particularly for those who need extra help with their learning, but they are not always used to best effect during lesson introductions when the teacher is addressing the whole class. A notable strength of assessment is the simple but effective system in Key Stage 2 whereby pupils routinely hand their work in by placing it in trays indicating whether they found it ‘too easy’, ‘too hard’ or appropriately challenging.

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

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The varied curriculum instils a sense of excitement among pupils. Every new topic is started with a session where pupils set out what they already know and what they would like to find out. This contributes to pupils’ sense of ownership of their learning. Pupils’ literacy and, to a lesser extent, their numeracy skills are reinforced through the various topics. A notable feature of this school is that activities such as charity fundraising are also integrated well. For example, pupils in Year 3 drew up a ‘business plan’, linked to their topic work, to use their budding enterprise skills to raise money for African aid. Music is given much prominence, with all pupils in two year groups learning instruments and growing in confidence as performers. Very close working partnerships with other schools help to boost staff expertise and contribute to high-quality provision, for example in information and communication technology. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of special themed weeks and days, including ‘Deco Day’, seen during the inspection, where parents and carers came into school to help children to make a range of seasonal decorations and confections. There is an extensive range of clubs, and more than three-quarters of the pupils take part in one or more.

The school’s excellent welfare arrangements ensure that all pupils, including those with quite severe special educational needs and/or disabilities, can take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. A relatively high proportion of pupils have serious allergies, and the school takes care to adapt provision, for example at lunchtime, to meet their needs and to minimise the risk of accidental exposure to anything that might trigger an allergic reaction. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the sensitive support provided for children and families facing difficulties or traumas. As one explained, ‘The school and teaching staff have been very supportive during a very difficult year for the family.’ More than 10% of pupils attend the breakfast club on one or more days, and this extension of the school day provides them with a good start.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the firm leadership of the headteacher, this school has come a long way since its last inspection. The issues from that inspection have been tackled very successfully, so that pupils now make very much more consistent progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, with high attainment evident across the curriculum, and not just in the key subjects of English and mathematics. The success of the school’s promotion

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of equal opportunities and tackling of discrimination is evident in the progress made by boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities. Leaders’ monitoring of teaching and learning identifies both strengths and areas for development, and these evaluations have contributed to the increased proportion of good and better lessons, but leaders sometimes grade lessons as outstanding when they also identify key points for development. Leaders have correctly identified that provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not kept up with those in Key Stages 1 and 2. Changes of staff have contributed to this, and leaders have already begun to address these shortcomings by, for example, settling on the assessment system to be used in the Nursery.

Members of the governing body visit regularly and so are not just dependent on the headteacher for their knowledge of what goes on in school. They are supportive but also challenge leaders. Although they are proud of the school’s success, there is no sense of complacency as they strive for still further improvement, especially for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, many governors are new to their role. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring school policies are regularly updated, and all are made readily available to parents and carers via the school website. It has ensured that the systems for pupils’ safeguarding fully meet government requirements. They go beyond this, for example, in their arrangements for immediately contacting parents and carers when a child fails to turn up for an after-school club.

The school functions as a harmonious community where all pupils get on very well together. Local community links are very strong, not least through the involvement of the very active school choir. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures, including through visits to many different places of worship. They also learn about other countries, including France, India and nations in Africa, as part of their themes and topics. Links have been established with schools in France and South Africa, and have just been developed with a school in an inner-city area in the United Kingdom which caters for children from quite different backgrounds.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the nursery and reception classes because of the good links made with parents and carers. Children are eager to come to school. They concentrate well and take the time to complete tasks which demand skill and focus, for example, when colouring in the rocket on a 'passport', taking pleasure and pride in the finished product. The passport was necessary because, as one boy explained with great excitement, 'We are going on a ship to the moon.' Children in Reception cooperate well, such as when they constructed a rocket which required joint effort to ensure it did not collapse during the making. Their ideas are encouraged and used to plan new activities to take their learning forward.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is new to the post. She ensures that procedures to assess and record children's progress are more sharply focused, and provide the information required to plan a curriculum which challenges all children. Assessments in the Nursery have hitherto lacked this focus. There is too much teacher direction during the morning and therefore too few opportunities for children to develop their independence and apply their language and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The 'Learning Journey' folders provide an attractive record of each child's development and are greatly valued by parents and carers.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Almost two-thirds of the parents and carers returned questionnaires; a much higher proportion than usually seen. Parents and carers express overwhelmingly positive views about every aspect of school. Many wrote at length to praise particular aspects of leadership, teaching, the curriculum and the arrangements for their children's welfare. A very small minority expressed the view that behaviour was not well managed. Inspectors saw behaviour and attitudes to learning throughout the school that were consistently of an exceptionally high standard.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Two Waters 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	106	77	32	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	102	74	31	22	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	72	52	61	44	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	55	60	43	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	90	65	48	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	87	63	50	36	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	63	50	36	1	1	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)	64	46	70	51	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	74	54	58	42	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	49	61	44	9	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	43	72	52	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	98	72	35	26	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	108	79	29	21	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Two Waters Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 0AU**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful, welcoming us to your school. Many of you and your parents and carers told us that you thought Two Waters is an excellent school. We agree! It is an extremely well run school where school leaders have had considerable success in driving through improvements since the last inspection. As a result, the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is consistently good or better and you all make good progress to reach standards that are higher than those in most other schools. Children do not make such good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so we have suggested some ways to help them to get off to a faster start.

We were very pleased to see how very well behaved you are in lessons and around the school, and how very well you all get on together. That helps to make Two Waters such a happy, friendly place to be. One reason why you do so well at school is because staff make learning interesting and fun, as we could see for ourselves during this year's Deco Day. The rigorous tasks teachers set for you make a big difference too because you are always ready to rise to the challenge. You feel very safe at school because staff take excellent care of you. That is especially important for those of you who need extra help with your learning.

When they mark your work, teachers often offer you helpful suggestions on how you can make it better. We have asked them to make sure that you get such good, clear guidance in every subject in every class. You can help with this too by always taking care to read the comments teachers write for you and doing your very best to follow their advice.

Thank you again for welcoming us to your school, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward  
Lead inspector

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