

# Westlands Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124119
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380807
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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>	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Aileen Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Pickard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Ostend Place Westlands Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 2QY
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<b>Fax number</b>	01782 296131
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	19–20 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380807



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Lois Furness

Additional inspector

Shela Rowan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 25 lessons taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including pupils' workbooks, data on attendance, improvement plans, progress reports, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 79 parents and carers. Responses to 68 pupil and six staff questionnaires were also analysed.

## Information about the school

In this smaller than average-sized primary school the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much lower than in most schools. The school meets the current floor standard. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is made in the Reception Class. In September 2011, a new headteacher and a new Early Years Foundation Stage teacher took up their posts. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School and Eco School status.

There is privately managed childcare provision onsite, which is subject to a separate inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.
- Overall effectiveness is inadequate. Although the school is providing an acceptable standard of education for the pupils and achievement is satisfactory, its leaders and managers have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about the improvements needed to make sure all pupils make consistently good progress. The above-average attainment noted at the time of the previous inspection has declined to broadly average, and important weaknesses in writing, and in the use of assessment, still remain.
- While attainment is now rising, especially in Years 1 and 2, it is not rising quickly enough throughout the school because teachers are not using assessment information rigorously to ensure that lesson activities are matched to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teaching is satisfactory. It is sometimes good especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage or when pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to read. In these lessons, a purposeful learning atmosphere is evident and teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that pupils confidently develop their decoding skills. However in some lessons the pace of new learning is too slow resulting in pupils, especially the more able, not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, and also behave sensibly around school. They

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have a good understanding of how to how to keep safe. Their attendance is above average. Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of pupils' behaviour and are confident that their children are well cared for and kept safe.

- The new headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, but has had too little time to overcome the weaknesses resulting from inadequate monitoring and evaluation over time. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have not been satisfactorily rectified.

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

- Ensure pupils attain higher standards and make good progress by:
  - making sure that teachers use assessment information to plan precisely the next steps of learning for each pupil
  - increasing the pace of learning in lessons so that pupils spend more time actively engaged in work
  - making sure that teachers' marking clearly identifies strengths and areas for improvement and pupils have time to respond to useful feedback
  - giving more attention to developing pupils' writing skills such as sentence structure, grammar and punctuation.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - establishing a rigorous cycle of monitoring which includes an evaluation of teachers' lesson planning, a review of the quality of work in pupils' books and an analysis of termly assessment information so that pupils' progress can be constantly monitored
  - ensuring that lesson observations focus on pupils' learning and the resulting feedback clearly evaluates the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
  - setting challenging targets, so an increasing proportion of pupils make two sub-levels of progress each year in reading, writing and mathematics
  - making staff accountable for the progress of pupils through monitoring pupils' progress towards their challenging targets
  - developing the skills of middle leaders so they can effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
  - improving the effectiveness of the governing body to provide constructive challenge by holding the school's leaders to account for pupils' performance.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception

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class with a range of skills and abilities that match those expected for their age. In this class children make good progress because teaching is good as the teacher carefully uses information about what children know already to plan future learning. Parents and carers are pleased with their children's progress. However, this good progress is not built upon well enough throughout the school. By Year 6 attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress and achievement are satisfactory. Faster progress is made in reading than in writing and mathematics. This faster progress in reading is due to regular focused or guided reading sessions where assessment information is used satisfactorily to identify new learning. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are working at age-related expectations. Daily 'Letters and Sounds' sessions in Years 1 and 2, ensure pupils are developing their reading skills competently. For example, after learning the sound 'ea', Year 2 pupils confidently read and wrote words such as beach and seaside. However, limited time is spent on developing writing skills such as sentence structure, grammar and punctuation.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn satisfactorily. They make similar progress to that of their peers, as do more-able pupils. There were no differences noted between boys' and girls' attainment during observations nor in the scrutiny of pupils' work, but published assessment information indicates that boys do not attain as highly as girls in English or mathematics. A curriculum which is better suited to boys was introduced in September, and this has successfully engaged boys in their learning which is leading to better progress. Pupils' satisfactory skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics ensure they are adequately prepared for the next stage of education.

### **Quality of teaching**

The Reception classroom provides a bright and stimulating learning environment and the outdoor area offers a safe working space for children to learn through experiencing a range of practical activities. Teaching is good and the carefully designed curriculum results in well-organised activities, with a strong emphasis on promoting independence, capturing children's interest and imagination and helping them to make good progress in their learning. In other classes the quality of teaching varies although pupils mainly work hard in all lessons. In good lessons, pupils are challenged well; for example in a Year 1 mathematics lesson as they investigated numbers to 20, more-able pupils learnt about place value while others explored number facts to 10. In a good geography lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were encouraged to apply their reading and research skills to learn more about volcanoes. However, in a small number of lessons, time was wasted as pupils sat listening to overly long introductions and then insufficient time was provided for pupils to work independently, and to record their ideas. In one instance, in Year 4, too much time was given for pupils to complete activities, resulting in more-able pupils chatting quietly while waiting for others to catch up. Pupils themselves say that work is too easy. As one pupil commented: 'It is more like revision than anything new!'

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Teachers take opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through offering chances to reflect on their experiences and work together. In all lessons seen, pupils were confident, and were very keen to contribute to discussions and answer their teachers' questions. They listen carefully to each other, collaborate successfully and have good team working skills. Their willingness to help others was seen in the Years 5 and 6 class as some pupils helped others to find words in a thesaurus.

The use of assessment to plan future learning is not secure and work in books and during lessons show that information about prior learning is not used carefully enough on a day-to-day basis. Too often, especially in writing, all pupils whatever their ability do the same work. It is through the additional support of teaching assistants that less-able pupils in particular, are able to complete the activity. Marking is carried out regularly but the feedback given does not always link to the intended learning. Although useful development points are sometimes identified, pupils do not consistently have time to respond to the teachers' comments to improve their work.

The vast majority of parents and carers consider that their children are well taught. Although good teaching was seen during the inspection, pupils' work and information about the progress they make confirms that teaching is predominantly satisfactory and there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes towards learning. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Punctuality is good. Good attitudes to learning start in Reception, where children work well together and behaviour is good. Throughout the rest of the school pupils are mainly well behaved and this was seen in lessons and as pupils moved around the school. At times, when lessons lack challenge or when pupils are expected to listen for too long, they became a little restless and fidgety. However, when engaged in their work, for example in a Year 3 science lesson when being 'rock detectives', they contributed eagerly and good concentration was evident. The pupils' questionnaire responses indicated that a small minority of pupils felt that behaviour is not as good as it should be in some year groups. In discussions with pupils from these classes, they said that most pupils behave well but two or three pupils occasionally 'spoil it for others.' Pupils consider that teachers deal with these disruptions effectively. The school can demonstrate marked improvements over time for pupils with challenging behaviour.

Pupils say they feel safe and parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe in school. A very small minority think that bullying is not dealt with well. However, pupils spoken to were insistent that there was no bullying of any type in school. They said that if silly behaviour occurs then adults sorted it out quickly and fairly. The pupils know how to keep safe and of the dangers of cyber bullying. All

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said they would tell an adult if anything worried or upset them. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs said they also felt safe and that their ideas were valued.

## **Leadership and management**

The new headteacher is working closely with staff and the governing body to establish a shared vision for the school's future. Staff morale is good throughout. The vast majority of parents and carers say they would recommend this school to others. However, leaders and managers have not demonstrated the sustained capacity to bring about the improvements needed to make sure that pupils make consistently good progress. Over time there has been an insufficient drive to raise achievement, and professional development has not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation systems lack rigour. For example, meetings are held termly to discuss pupils' progress but challenging targets are not set for pupils and staff are not held accountable for how well pupils are making progress. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. Lesson observations, for example in English, are too descriptive because they focus too much on what teachers are doing rather than how well pupils are learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate; for example both the use of assessment and the need for improvement in pupils' writing were identified as improvement points.

The governing body is supportive and aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, it does not challenge the school's leaders strongly enough or check whether pupils are learning as well as they should in each year group. Safeguarding procedures meet all current government requirements and give no cause for concern. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Leaders effectively ensure all pupils have the opportunity to take part in all activities on offer; however the detailed analysis of pupils' performance is not used effectively enough to identify where improvements are needed.

The new headteacher has evaluated the quality of provision accurately and identified that boys are not learning as well as girls. As a result, a more imaginative and creative curriculum has been introduced which has already effectively motivated all pupils including boys. Topics such as 'Volcanoes' in Years 5 and 6 and 'Dinosaurs' in Year 1 have sparked pupils' interest and concentration. Topics such as these satisfactorily promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils share ideas and appreciate nature. 'Wow!' was the comment as pupils viewed pictures showing the force of an erupting volcano. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, as yet these new features have not had time to accelerate the progress being made by pupils.



## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Westlands Primary School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 2QY**

Thank you for your welcome when my colleague and I visited the school recently. Thank you also for sharing your thoughts in conversations with us, and through the questionnaire. I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school.

Although the school is providing you with a satisfactory education, it is not helping you to make as much progress as you could. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 your attainment is similar to that of pupils in most schools across the country. However you could attain more highly and make good progress if your teachers used their knowledge about what you know already so that new work in lessons is more challenging. Although teaching is satisfactory, we have said that teachers should make sure that you are always actively learning and are given the time to think about how to improve your work after they have marked it. You can help by continuing to behave well at all times, working hard and by telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult.

You listen carefully to your teachers and this helps you to learn. We know that you feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe. It was good to hear there is no bullying in school and that any silly behaviour is sorted out quickly and fairly. The new curriculum topics seem to be working well and it is good to know you are enjoying learning by finding out more about dinosaurs and volcanoes, for example. Younger children in the Reception class make good progress because teaching is good. Children are very happy in this class and it was good to see how they worked together by sharing ideas and resources.

At this time the school is not doing well enough and has been judged to require a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit the school again to see how well progress is being made. We have asked the governors and staff to tighten up how they make checks on the school's performance

Thank you again for your help on this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness  
Lead inspector

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