

Westdale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122535
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	359267
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrea Burrell
Headteacher	Anthony Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed six teachers over 17 lessons. Meetings were held with members of the senior management team and middle leaders, with groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to pupils' achievement, examples of their work, the school development plan and policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. The inspectors analysed staff and pupil questionnaires and the 93 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- It explored the effectiveness of provision and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups, in promoting their achievement.
- It assessed the school's promotion of community cohesion through its provision for pupils' cultural and multi-cultural development and how it impacts on pupils knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live.
- It investigated how effectively assessment is driving attainment and giving pupils ownership of their learning.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average primary school. Over a third of pupils travel from outside the catchment area to attend the school. Although most pupils are of White British heritage, a growing proportion are from minority ethnic groups. A well below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, of which most are moderate learning needs. A lower than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school has achieved the Intermediate level of the International Schools Award and the Healthy Schools Gold Award. It belongs to the Wheldon Family of Schools which provides professional development opportunities for the staff and additional learning opportunities for the pupils, both within the school day and out-of-hours. A before and after-school club and a holiday club, run by an outside provider, are held on the site.

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, which continues to move forward. Almost all aspects of its work are good, and the effectiveness of its partnerships with parents and carers, the extent to which it keeps pupils safe, and the degree to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles are all outstanding. Pupils' good achievement is driven by the very focused leadership of the headteacher, who leads by example and monitors all aspects of the school's performance rigorously. Its good capacity for sustained improvement is confirmed by accurate self-evaluation, effective middle leaders who are increasingly monitoring performance in their subjects and by knowledgeable governors; they find out about the school's work through their wide involvement and independent monitoring. All findings of monitoring are responded to promptly, in order to drive improvements in provision and outcomes for all pupils. As a result, while attainment is average over-time, it was above average last year and projections point to above average attainment this year. The school's joined-up approach to planning and the warmth of the school towards pupils, and parents and carers are significant in its success.

This inclusive school is richer for the growing diversity of the pupils that it serves. It has put to good effect the different cultures and lifestyles that are represented. There is a real relevance to teaching and learning about other cultures and faiths, which promote pupils' good understanding, respect and empathy. As a result, pupils get on well with each other and play and learn harmoniously, demonstrating community cohesion within the school.

Effective provision through the school leads to the pupils' good progress. While most teaching is good, there remains some satisfactory teaching within some year groups, where activities can lack fine-tuning and so slow the rate of pupils' progress. The school's information and inspection evidence show that the good progress of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities is aided by prompt and relevant support, based on accurate analysis of their needs. Tasks are carefully chosen to facilitate their progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve similarly to other pupils because the school knows their needs and circumstances equally well and responds to them in lesson planning.

From the time that pupils start school, they are involved in decisions about school and learning. Increasingly, they are taking ownership of their targets, which are becoming a focus of their learning. They can see their progress towards them through teachers' helpful marking and guidance in lessons. Pupils do not often, however, assess for themselves the quality of their work or that of their peers to develop their skills and increase their understanding of their strengths and how they can move further forward.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - providing tasks that are always at the right level so that they fully meet pupils' needs
 - ensuring that pupils regularly assess their own learning and that of their peers in order to reflect on the quality of their learning and to develop skills in critical thinking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The staff's good knowledge of the levels at which pupils work and how they like to learn are key factors in their good progress from their average starting points and through Key Stage 1. Comprehensive communication with the Early Years Foundation Stage staff ensures continuity and a quick and accurate start to learning in Key Stage 1. It is facilitated by the prompt identification of the staff of any under-achieving pupils, which leads to effective support from teaching assistants. Challenging targets are met, including for pupils with the potential to achieve higher levels. Pupils' good progress is encouraged by well-chosen topics, which give them a 'hook' to their learning. In a literacy lesson, their cultural understanding was promoted through a compelling story of a race to determine which creatures would have a month of the year named after them. Pupils were involved throughout, including in reading and putting forward reasons for why the story developed as it did. The teacher's specific questioning enabled pupils to make good progress towards the learning objective, including those capable of reaching higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well because of the accurate match to their needs and the focused support and guidance of teaching assistants.

Pupils are happy. Their involvement in decisions and the responsibilities that they are given in lessons and around the school, including 'Our Voice', promote their good attitudes to learning, their confidence and a range of personal skills. They have an excellent understanding of how to be safe and how to stay safe because of a comprehensive programme, which has been backed up by their involvement in decisions about, for example, making the playground a safe place. Many pupils are eating healthily and taking part in sporting activities, including out of lessons. They display an outstanding understanding of the importance of these in keeping fit, reflecting the school's Healthy Schools Gold Award. There is an ethos of care and respect for others, which is promoted well in the learning of different cultures and faiths and the circumstances of people near and far. It leads to their enthusiastic fund-raising for people and animals that need support. The present above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, good competences in using computers and good inter-personal skills result in their good preparation for junior school. While attendance is average, most pupils attend very regularly but attendance figures are pulled down by holidays being taken in term-time.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn in a bright and welcoming environment, full of displays of their work. Classrooms are happy places in which they are keen to learn and where they behave sensibly. There are common strengths to teaching. Teachers know their subjects well and they make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils. They use a range of methods to motivate pupils. In the best lessons, learning is based on situations or activities that they can relate to and tasks meet their needs accurately. The inter-active white boards are used well as a tool for learning. While most teaching is good, there are occasions when tasks do not interest pupils as well as they should, and work is too hard or too easy. Teachers' marking is helpful to pupils because it tells them what they have achieved and the next steps. But there are few chances for them to assess the quality of their own work or that of other children with whom they learn. As a result, a few opportunities to introduce skills of critical thinking are missed. Reports home are excellent because they give detailed information about pupils' achievement in all subjects.

Pupils' good progress is closely linked to effective organisation of learning. In particular, the school's decision to extend child-led learning into Year 1 and where necessary into Year 2 to best meet pupils' needs, has created a curriculum where pupils discover for themselves, within a clear structure. The curriculum is creative and planned in topics that incorporate links across a range of subjects, broadening and deepening learning. Resources are well chosen, including computers, which are used regularly. Personal, social

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and health education is promoted well through the school, both through daily routines and programmes of learning. Pupils who find some work difficult are provided for effectively so that they can also achieve their potential. The school uses its partnerships with other schools to extend opportunities, including good provision for those with a specific talent. Provision in lessons for gifted pupils is developing. The pupils are delighted by the range of visits, visitors and special weeks, all of which help them to practise and discover academic, personal and inter-personal skills. Pupils look forward to the popular after-school clubs and Spanish lessons.

The pupils feel very secure within the supportive environment and the well-established routines to keep them safe, which contribute to their good development and well-being. Staff's availability to pupils gives them confidence that they are safe and cared for. Health and safety practices back up the practical care that they receive. Pupils who have specific issues, or who are vulnerable, are supported and guided sensitively because staff have an accurate understanding of their needs. As a result they settle to learning quickly and overall achieve well. The school's good links with external agencies enable specialist help when needed. As a result, pupils become more confident about themselves, participate more fully in lessons and achieve well. Arrangements for preparing pupils for the next class and for junior school promote their confidence for the next stage of learning. Attendance is closely monitored and action taken to support pupils who are absent.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the staff share a common vision and ambition to move the school forward. Constant and detailed monitoring of the school's performance by senior and middle leaders are the basis of its work. The governing body is an effective partner in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, contributing to reviews of the quality of teaching and learning and having a good overview of the performance of the school because of its broad involvement. It oversees safeguarding procedures well through robust reviews of policies and processes, including the quality of risk assessments. The school works closely and effectively with a range of organisations to strengthen provision and support. Together with its own monitoring of the progress and involvement of all of its pupils, it ensures good equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination. The international links that the school has developed and the wide range of partnerships in the locality demonstrate that community cohesion is being promoted well. However, it is the outstanding effectiveness of its partnerships with parents and carers that most enables the school to develop pupils' potential and to support their needs. The importance in which

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the school views the home/school partnerships is demonstrated by a teacher having specific responsibility for organising and evaluating events such as family learning.

These are the grades for 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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 come from 14 different pre-school settings. Most enter with knowledge and skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, although below in communication, language and literacy. There are variations from year to year. Arrangements to help them settle into school are comprehensive, involve parents and carers and are spread over several weeks. They include information sessions so that they can assist their children's reading development. It is from this point that the very productive relationships between parents and carers and the school are formed.

The children settle down very quickly, aided by well-established routines. They make good progress through the stage. This is because teaching is effective, with a wide range of interesting, and sometimes exciting tasks in the classroom. Activities enable the children to develop skills across all aspects of learning and include using computers. The outdoor area, though, is not used often enough as an extension to the classroom. Staff observe and assess the children's learning regularly, recording their achievements in their personal profiles. Learning journals provide good coverage over time of, for example, children's personal, social, spiritual and academic knowledge and understanding. The leader of the stage is rightly prioritising speaking and listening activities, both through teaching, questioning and children's conversations as they play and learn. Mark-making is part of all activities and gives the children a good start to forming letters. Tasks usually match accurately the levels at which the children work. They are encouraged to learn for themselves and to be independent and as a result, the children are increasingly choosing activities for themselves.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority said their children enjoy school and that the school helps them to support their children's learning. Most responded positively to every statement. There were many positive comments. One parent or carer echoed the views of many in stating that, 'This is a very happy and secure school, with a friendly and approachable headteacher and staff.' Another wrote, 'The school's approach to education is very integrated, placing equal importance on children's personal development and academic learning.' Parents and carers raised a few individual concerns which the inspection team looked into through observations and discussions. Although the inspectors did not find any negative evidence, the concerns have been brought to the headteacher's attention, while preserving the confidentiality of the writers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westdale Infant 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	69	27	29	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	60	33	35	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	43	46	49	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	53	34	37	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	53	40	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	59	36	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	63	31	33	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)	41	44	40	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	46	41	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	39	46	49	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	42	46	49	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	63	30	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	63	31	33	0	0	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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">■ 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.



2 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westdale Infant School, Nottingham, NG3 6ET

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and watching you play and learn. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your school. We thought your singing was wonderful!

Here are some of the other things we found out about your school.

It is a good school.

You are happy there.

You make good progress.

You behave well

You feel very safe and know lots about staying healthy.

Teaching is good.

Learning is interesting and often fun.

The headteacher and all of the staff and the governors work hard for you.

There is a good range of after-school activities, as well as trips and visits.

Parents and carers are greatly valued by the school.

Your school can be even better. I have asked your headteacher to:

- make sure the tasks you do are at exactly the right level for you - not too hard or too easy
- give you regular chances to assess your own work and that of other children in your class.

We were pleased to see that you work hard at school. We hope that you will continue to do your best. You can help by listening carefully when teachers show you how to assess each others' work.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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