

Westover Green Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123733
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359501
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Jones
Headteacher	Heather Good
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
School address	Westover Green Bridgwater Somerset TA6 7HB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The team observed 19 lessons and 13 teachers and carried out two learning walks. Nine lesson observations and the two learning walks were completed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, the Chair of Governors, and a group of parents and carers. A telephone discussion was held with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and studied school policies and documentation, safeguarding procedures and data on pupils' progress. They looked at 80 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 33 from staff and 92 from pupils.

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

- How the school is closing the gap between the attainment of pupils and the national average in English and mathematics.
- How leaders and managers use tracking systems, including those related to attendance, to ensure that all groups achieve as well as they can.
- How teaching, marking and curriculum enrichment opportunities support pupils' learning so that all groups progress as well as they can.
- The school's work in community cohesion.

Information about the school

Westover Green Community School is larger than the average-sized primary school and serves Bridgewater and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is rising. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving between the start of Reception and the end of Year 6 is high. Pupils are taught in 12 single-aged or mixed-aged classes. The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

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

Westover Green is a vibrant learning environment which provides pupils with a good quality education. A key strength is the good progress that all pupils make from exceptionally low starting points. Pupils' high levels of enjoyment relate to the exciting curriculum, which provides some outstanding opportunities, such as working with local artists on willow sculptures for the school grounds. Parents and carers praise the good care afforded to their children so that pupils feel safe and happy in school. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and enthusiasm for learning help them to achieve well. The school is quite rightly proud of its welcoming atmosphere, strong sense of community and the support it gives to pupils and their families. As one parent put it, 'Nothing is ever too much trouble.'

The performance of pupils in English and mathematics is variable for different groups. Pupils who start their education in Reception and progress through to the end of Year 6 perform broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Those pupils who join school partway through their primary education learn well and make good progress relative to their starting points. However, some groups and individuals fail to catch up to the national average at the end of Year 6. Attendance is broadly average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced and there has been a significant decrease in the number of pupils excluded from school. Attendance for some individuals is low, which means that some youngsters are missing parts of their education. As a result, standards overall in English and mathematics are low. However, current school data show an improving picture because the school's effective intervention programmes are carefully customised for all individuals and groups. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve higher standards in mathematics than those with special educational needs and/or disabilities nationally. The school supports pupils' emotional and social development well, leading to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.

The school's self-evaluation of areas for improvement is sharply focused and analysis of all pupils' current progress towards achieving higher standards in English and mathematics shows a strongly improving picture. Governance is good and there is strong leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders. These things indicate that the school has a good capacity to make improvements necessary to raise standards further.

Gifted and talented pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, for example in art, and make outstanding progress. Older pupils show highly developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and the standards they achieve are impressive. Links with local further education establishments mean that the pupils have a good understanding of the world of work. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the opportunity the school gives their children to aspire to successful careers for the future.

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Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school and local community, and their efforts, such as fund-raising for charities, are celebrated through the school's highly valued Children's University.

The school's effective pastoral systems support families and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to overcome difficulties, such as encouraging regular attendance. Pupils are helped to prepare for the day at school through time set aside to spend with staff skilled in supporting their emotional needs. The school tracks attendance but possible links between low attendance and standards in English and mathematics achieved by individuals and different groups of pupils are not yet analysed and addressed. The school recognises this is an area for development to ensure that no pupil underachieves as a result of not attending school regularly.

Good teaching and an innovative curriculum with some outstanding aspects are key features in the school's success in ensuring all pupils progress well. The school's work on a consistency of approach within teaching means that teachers use assessment well, pupils know their targets and teachers' marking generally helps pupils to improve their work. Teaching engages pupils well and is securing their good progress. However, occasionally, key subject vocabulary and the learning tasks are not explained well enough or broken down into small enough steps, so some pupils do not understand the work they are set.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on successful initiatives already in place to ensure all individuals and groups of pupils attend school regularly in line with targets set, so that attendance figures continue to show improvement towards the national average.
- Analyse the performance in English and mathematics of poorer attending groups of pupils, and support any underperformance through filling gaps in their learning.
- Break down tasks set in lessons into small steps and ensure pupils understand key vocabulary, so that all individuals achieve as well as they can.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The youngest children begin school with skills, knowledge and understanding well below expected levels in early literacy, numeracy and social and emotional skills. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, performance in National Curriculum tests shows pupils have made good progress from exceptionally low starting points. Pupils' skills in literacy are developed through discussion, such as when older pupils reflected on an argument for and against healthy eating. Pupils showed an insightful understanding of presenting a biased argument when commenting, 'using words such as "our kids are starving" has a particularly hard effect on the reader.' From pupils' exceptionally low starting points, this represents outstanding progress in understanding aspects of literacy. In mathematics, younger pupils demonstrated impressive perseverance in working out how to add two-digit numbers together and showed they could choose their own methods and equipment. Those who needed more help were confident to ask the teacher and as a result, with adult help, achieved well. Older pupils make outstanding progress and achieve high standards in information and communication technology, such as making films and improving their work to make the end result more interesting for the audience.

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Pupils apply themselves diligently in lessons. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities demonstrate good achievement in a range of subjects. They are particularly proud of their creative work, such as making models from recycled materials. During a drumming session, the youngest children listened carefully and eagerly awaited the opportunity to join in with a visiting drummer. Consequently, they achieved well in learning a new musical skill. The school is aware of the need for a constant focus on improving pupils' communication skills through enrichment opportunities. The success of this can be seen in the outstanding way gifted and talented pupils expertly describe the work of various artists. For example, older pupils discuss how colour and pattern used by a particular artist 'makes the imagination run wild'. Pupils apply their skills in a range of contexts, such as working on projects. From problem-solving activities, such as building shelters outside, older pupils demonstrate important life-skills, such as team and leadership roles. Through the curriculum, pupils reflect on moral, spiritual, social and cultural issues. As a result, they are knowledgeable about other cultures and their moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is good.

The good links with the local community have shown pupils work-related and further education opportunities to which they can aspire. Work-place skills are further developed through wide-ranging information technology opportunities. The school council and the Eco Team play an important part in the school and their work is reflected in the Silver Award for Eco-Schools. Pupils are keen to volunteer for responsibility and apply to the headteacher to run their own lunchtime clubs, which are very popular with other pupils. Pupils represent the views of the school in group discussions with other schools locally. They have a good understanding of staying healthy through diet and exercise and this is reflected in Healthy Schools Status. The school has plans in place to develop pupils' role further by promoting healthy lifestyles to help others to live healthily.

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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	4
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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?

The creative elements of the curriculum provide pupils with some outstanding opportunities for learning and personal development. Skilful teaching brings together the development of pupils' literacy and mathematical skills through other subjects. For example, in an art lesson for a gifted and talented group of older pupils, the teacher introduced pupils to new vocabulary and as a result, pupils talked confidently about each other's work, referring to using a 'riot of colour'. A discussion followed on words with the same meaning and in this way, pupils' language abilities are extended. Opportunities to link information and communication technology to other subjects are well developed, such as improving sentences to use more interesting vocabulary. ICT activities provide outstanding experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning. Families who do not have computers at home are provided with opportunities to use facilities in school.

Well-targeted interventions for individuals whose attendance is low ensure that pupils are able to make the most of the opportunities offered to them and attend school regularly. One such very effective example is the 'Give it a go!' scheme which successfully helps pupils to attend breakfast club so they benefit from a nutritious and secure start to the day. The school tracks attendance for individuals and this is discussed at pupil progress meetings. Exceptional circumstances such as winter snow and the impact of swine flu have meant that attendance is lower for some individuals. Good attendance is continually rewarded through certificates and prizes and these are shared with parents and carers.

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The school recognises that it needs to build on this successful work by setting targets to continue to raise the attendance of groups and individuals.

Effective teaching ensures that pupils are motivated and engaged in lessons, leading to the good progress they make. Teachers' planning shows tasks set for different abilities and teachers' assessment makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils know the targets they are working towards and can assess their own performance in lessons, such as how well they are doing in mathematics. In the outstanding lessons observed, teachers' excellent subject knowledge led to seamless links with literacy and numeracy in different subjects. The social and emotional needs of all groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well met because of individual programmes and good support in lessons from teaching assistants. These interventions have been wholeheartedly praised by parents, carers, pupils and their families.

Occasionally, teachers miss the opportunity to check pupils' understanding and give further explanation, for example by explaining key science vocabulary relating to the 'Water Cycle'. Younger pupils sometimes lack the language skills needed for mathematics, for example comparing numbers, and consequently this hinders their progress. The school is aware that occasionally teachers' marking in English and mathematics misses the opportunity to set challenges for pupils to improve their work. It has plans to address this through the recently reviewed marking policy.

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?

Leaders and managers have created a climate of continuing improvement. Their concerted actions, such as the 'Give it a go' scheme, provision for gifted and talented pupils, and information and communication technology have promoted equality of opportunity which has resulted in improvements in performance and attendance of groups of pupils. They have further promoted equality of opportunity by giving all pupils a range of, at times, outstanding opportunities, such as through the creative curriculum and involvement in the local community. Parents and carers praise this aspect of the school's work and refer to the school as 'a little community'. Community cohesion is promoted through the inspiring curriculum and this is a major factor in developing pupils' knowledge of international communities. Work related to pupils' wider understanding of different communities living in Britain is developing. Families new to the school report that their children settle well. Parents praise the work of the school in supporting learning at home through the family learning sessions on offer. In this way, leaders are helping to raise the aspirations of families and their children.

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Leaders and managers are well versed in analysing the progress made by all pupils. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and the feedback given to teachers ensure that the pace of improvement set through realistic whole-school targets is achievable. The governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They have an in-depth knowledge of the school community, including the views of parents and carers. Their contribution to the school's robust self-evaluation plays a valuable role in setting the school's strategic direction and adjusting plans to meet the needs of the school community. Child protection responsibilities are clear and safeguarding arrangements are good, particularly in working with other professionals and agencies.

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	2
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 in Reception enjoy the variety of learning tasks provided for them. Adults plan activities carefully, responding to the children's individual needs. The focus on being 'ready for learning' by adults makes an effective contribution to children's good progress and supports their independence. Children are able to select their own activity inside or outside with the help of a 'choosing teddy'. Children enjoy learning through a variety of opportunities, such as for early writing, where children are keen to write their names. Occasionally, adults miss the opportunity to help children develop early literacy and mathematical skills through their play and this hinders the development of their skills. Parents and carers speak highly of the careful induction, which means their children settle happily and make friends. The good relationships and well-organised routines enable children to feel safe.

Adults in Reception are a cohesive and well-led team. They demonstrate a strong capacity for self-improvement and are continually reflecting on the effectiveness of their practice. A good example seen during the inspection was where adults responded quickly to the

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needs of all children. In order to develop children's language skills through singing songs, groups were made smaller in number so that adults concentrated on developing individual children's early communication skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader maintains good quality data on children's progress, shares this with parents and carers, and uses the information to track and monitor children's achievement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaire responses returned was over one quarter of all parents and carers, and of these, an overwhelmingly majority are happy with all aspects of their children's education at school. They speak with pride about their children's excellent behaviour at school. They express the view that the school prepares their children well for the next step in their education. Parents and carers say they are well informed about their children's progress and particularly appreciate the individual home-school diaries for keeping them informed. A very small minority of parents expressed a concern about arrangements for pupils leaving school at the end of the day. During the inspection, inspectors observed well-organised systems for ensuring pupils' safety on leaving the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 303 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	68	24	30	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	75	18	23	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	56	33	41	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	60	30	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	70	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	60	29	36	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	55	36	45	0	0	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)	43	54	31	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	59	31	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	53	31	39	4	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	45	40	50	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	59	25	31	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	70	22	28	2	3	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	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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westover Green Community School, Bridgwater TA6 7HB

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team on our recent visit. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the exciting activities your school provides for you. Your parents and carers told us how pleased they were with the progress you make. We were interested to hear your views, and these helped us to make our judgements. ♦ Your school gives you a good education. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- The headteacher, staff and governors lead your school well.
- You have very positive attitudes to learning and behave extremely well.
- Your progress is good, especially in mathematics.
- The good teaching means you enjoy school.
- The good curriculum has some outstanding features, such as opportunities for art, music, sport, drama and ICT.
- You have a good understanding of other cultures in different parts of the world.
- The Children's University celebrates your good efforts in the community.
- Those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities perform well.
- Some of you achieve average standards in English and mathematics but this is not the case for all of you.
- Some of you do not come to school as regularly as you should and this means you are missing your education.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on some areas to improve your work. We have asked them to help those of you who do not come to school as regularly as you should, and your families, so that your attendance improves. We have also asked your teachers to plan tasks in lessons which are broken down into small steps so that you understand key vocabulary and the task set to ensure that you achieve as well as you can. I am confident you will do all you can to help by working hard and coming to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector

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