

Westfield Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123864
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359530
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	870
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Warwick-Mortimer
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 40 lessons taught by 40 teachers, four of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its analysis of student progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff and community partners. Inspectors also scrutinised the school development plan, policies, reports from the School Improvement Partner and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires from 133 parents and carers, 134 students and 70 staff.

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

- The effectiveness and sustainability of strategies to raise attainment and improve rates of progress for all students, especially in English.
- The impact of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment.
- The effectiveness of provision for less-able students and the impact on their achievement.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving improvement in teaching, learning and students' outcomes.

Information about the school

Westfield is a slightly smaller than average community school serving the Somerset town of Yeovil. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds; a very small minority belong to minority ethnic groups. A similar proportion speak English as an additional language. A smaller than average proportion of students are currently identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has held specialist status for science since September 2002. It recently received the Healthy Schools Plus award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The principal and senior leaders of Westfield Community School have set out clear principles underpinning their determination to produce 'successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens'. As a result, expectations and aspirations are growing, and Westfield is a satisfactory and improving school. Students feel extremely safe and are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with promptly and fairly. Their parents and carers strongly agree that the school keeps them safe.

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been expanded and is now tailored to meet the needs of all students, including the most vulnerable. Particular care has been taken to provide courses and wider learning experiences that will engage and sustain students' interest and enhance their employability. The improved curriculum, as well as targeted action and effective use of partnerships, has contributed to rising rates of attendance, now above the national average.

Behaviour has also improved since the last inspection and is now good. Students were polite, courteous and welcoming during the inspection. Behaviour was good in the large majority of lessons and satisfactory only when the lesson was not sufficiently challenging or engaging. In about half of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching challenged students' thinking and provided opportunities for active learning. In too many lessons, however, learning and progress were judged only satisfactory. This was often because teachers had not used assessment information effectively to tailor activities so that different learning needs were met, or to provide well-focused feedback on how to improve.

The science specialism is supporting the drive for improvement in a number of ways. Science results rose steeply in 2010 and the school's satisfactory tracking of students' progress indicates a further improvement in 2011. Science-based curriculum enhancement is providing exciting opportunities for students to extend their learning. Uptake of science GCSEs and A levels is rising rapidly. Outreach to partner schools is raising the status of Westfield in the wider community. The science department is effectively placed to spread this good practice among other faculties and has begun to do so, although the impact of this is yet to be fully realised.

Senior leaders have evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. They have harnessed the commitment and enthusiasm of staff and students effectively and secured improvement in a number of areas. Tighter systems of monitoring and accountability are beginning to show in improved learning and progress measures. Middle leaders share the ambition for high levels of achievement, but their success in driving improvement is variable. Achievement overall remains satisfactory, as do teaching and learning. Not enough lessons seen during the inspection reflected the high expectations

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for learning and progress articulated in improvement plans. On balance, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise student attainment further, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use assessment information effectively to plan activities to meet the full range of learning needs
 - provide opportunities for students to become actively involved in their learning, including through discussion
 - systematically assess student understanding in lessons, for example through targeted and probing questioning, and adapt their teaching accordingly to maximise progress for all
 - provide regular, specific and developmental feedback to students on how to improve their work, both verbally and in marking.
- Ensure that all middle leaders are equally effective, through rigorous systems of monitoring and accountability, in driving improvements in provision and outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enjoy their lessons and are well motivated. They respond well to lessons that challenge them to think and allow them opportunities to discuss what they know. Too often, however, a dependence on listening to the teacher for extended periods of time results in students becoming passive and opportunities to extend and deepen their understanding are missed. ♦

Most students now make progress in line with typical expectations, given their starting points. This is an improvement on recent years, when progress had been significantly below expectations and uneven across subjects. Attainment is also improving and is now average overall, although the picture varies across subjects. In 2010, for example, attainment in GCSE science rose to significantly above the national average, while attainment in GCSE English was significantly below average. Concerted action to redress such imbalance has resulted in an improvement in English results in examinations taken early in 2011, with further improvement predicted in the summer. Progress for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with their peers. They show awareness of their levels and targets, and are generally very well supported, but need help in understanding how to improve academically.

Students respond with maturity to systems for managing behaviour. Relationships are constructive and good-humoured and conflict is effectively resolved through procedures that encourage students to reflect upon the impact of their behaviour on others. Students are well informed about issues surrounding their health and well-being, being able, for example, to evaluate their own eating choices as well as the potential risks of internet use. They justifiably feel that their opinions count. They enjoy taking an active part in their

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own learning and in determining the direction of the school, whether by consulting with the principal on proposed changes, acting as peer tutors or reading with younger students. They contribute to the community beyond the school, for example through their public services course or their extensive participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Their above average attendance and good attitudes to learning, combined with improving basic skills, are helping to prepare them well for the future. They demonstrate responsible attitudes and good moral and social understanding, although they are less secure in their understanding of less familiar cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

In the best lessons, teachers share criteria for success with students and model what is expected. They explain the purpose of the lesson clearly and check understanding at regular intervals. They target varied and probing questions at the full range of students, not just those with hands up. Challenge is sustained and everyone is expected to think and to contribute. The best marking clearly highlights how to improve. Students enjoy and respond well to the 'what went well' and 'even better if' model for assessing and developing their work, but its application is variable across the school.

In lessons that are satisfactory, not enough time is allocated to activities that require students to work independently or such work loses pace because it lacks challenge.

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Marking is sometimes infrequent or does not clarify understanding to support further progress.

Senior leaders make effective use of thorough curriculum reviews to ensure that the needs and interests of all students are met. By working in partnership with other institutions, the school has widened the provision of vocational courses and Young Apprenticeships. A home-grown foundation learning programme addresses the needs of the most vulnerable students. It successfully combines practical learning, such as construction and child development, with a focused core curriculum in English, mathematics and science. A new garden area in the school grounds, with decking, planting and murals, has been professionally constructed by foundation learning students and is evidence of their commitment to the school and to their own learning and development. Students appreciate and enjoy a range of extension and enrichment activities which are accessible to all, although there is no detailed analysis of the take-up of this among different groups.

Arrangements for care, guidance and support are well organised and effectively targeted. Transition points, for example between primary and secondary school, or from Year 9 into GCSE courses, are smooth. One parent commented, 'We had many worries about our child transferring to secondary school, but all of these were gone within the first couple of weeks.' The well-managed options system provides appropriate guidance for students based on thorough knowledge of individual needs and abilities. Ongoing success is sustained through targeted support, such as that provided by the 'narrowing the gap' teacher assistant, who closely monitors the safety, progress and attendance of students on college courses.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 principal and senior team have been effective in establishing a culture of success at Westfield. Systems for monitoring performance at whole school and faculty level are well established. A range of well-appointed partnerships is helping to develop middle leaders, who are well supported and are highly accountable for results. The impact of leadership on achievement is beginning to show in the improved results in 2010 and well-founded predictions for further improvement in 2011. There is less evidence, however, of sustained improvements in teaching.

The governing body has an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It complies fully with statutory requirements, including ensuring the safety of students and staff. There are established systems for seeking the views of parents and

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carers, such as through the parents' forum, which is attended by a link governor, or via the netbook surveys conducted at parents' evenings.

The school has been proactive in seeking partnerships that will enhance the learning and prospects of Westfield students. The Year 9 'Robotics Challenge' and the contribution of a university mathematics lecturer to top set GCSE classes have led to increased numbers taking mathematics and science at A level. The school also makes its own effective contribution, such as sending specialist mathematics and science teachers to teach Year 6 children in local primary schools.

The achievement of different groups of students is monitored carefully as part of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. The improved progress of students entering the school with below average skill levels, a previously underachieving group, is evidence of successful intervention. The school adopts recommended good practice in its approach to safeguarding. Students and staff have a high level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe and school systems have been adapted to facilitate quick reporting of any concerns. Senior leaders understand the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of the school. Plans to develop students' awareness of this are in evidence although not fully developed. Students' understanding of wider national and global contexts is being supported through citizenship studies and other curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

Senior leaders are careful to apply best value principles in the procurement of services and to consider all budget expenditure in terms of its impact on student outcomes. Students and parents are appreciative of improvements, for example to the dining hall.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The very large majority of them are happy with their children's experience at Westfield. Most agreed that the school keeps their children safe, deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and informs them about progress. Although the inspection found students to be well informed about healthy lifestyles, a lower than average proportion of parents and carers agreed that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 870 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	20	89	67	12	9	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	29	22	96	72	5	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	26	87	65	6	5	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	36	68	51	12	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	28	21	89	67	8	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	15	90	68	18	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	10	91	68	23	17	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)	28	21	79	59	11	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	22	83	62	10	8	5	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	18	83	62	17	13	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	18	80	60	16	12	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	19	90	68	13	10	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	32	75	56	6	5	3	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 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 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">■ 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.



9 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Westfield Community School, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3EP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us during the recent inspection of your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour, both around school and in lessons. You told us that your school has improved a great deal and we agree that many things are better than when it was last inspected. Overall, we think it is a satisfactory school and that there is room for improvement in your learning and examination results.

You are enjoying the benefits of a wider and more interesting curriculum and taking advantage of opportunities like the Young Apprenticeship scheme. Some of you have been involved in the Foundation Learning or Step Up courses, which are helping you to get more out of school and also to give something back. We very much admired the beautiful garden students have created in the school grounds, complete with decking and murals we thought Ground Force had visited!

Examination results improved last year. Those of you who took GCSE English early have gained confidence from your results. You are respectful of one another and work well together in lessons. When your teachers plan opportunities for you to work in groups and to discuss what you are learning, you do particularly well. However, not enough lessons are currently like this. We have asked Mr Hunt and his senior team to make the way you learn a focus for improvement and to ensure that lessons always challenge and involve all of you. You can help by getting fully involved in your learning and making the most of every opportunity to discuss what you know and how to improve.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside

Her Majesty's Inspector

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