

Westfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131933
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	360340
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Charles Hackett

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Walker
Headteacher	Geoff Allen
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
School address	Highfield Road Bourne End SL8 5BE
Telephone number	01628533125
Fax number	01628 523345
Email address	office@westfield.bucks.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. He observed seven lessons, covering both key stages, and saw seven teachers. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at lesson planning, data on pupils' achievements, a range of school policies and the minutes of governors' meetings. The responses to questionnaires from 19 parents and carers, 28 pupils and 10 staff were considered.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The systems used by the school to track the rates of progress of different groups of pupils, including those in its specialist unit and the few girls.
- The improvements pupils make in managing their behaviour.
- The key qualities of teaching, learning and the curriculum that address the needs of its pupils.
- The benefits of links with other schools and agencies.

Information about the school

Westfield provides for pupils with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils have additional needs such as dysphasia, dyslexia, sensory integration difficulties and mental health issues. About 60% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. All pupils have experienced difficulties in their previous school placements that have led to non-attendance or informal and formal exclusions. Of the present population, over 40% are supported by social care agencies and one is in the care of the local authority; there are very few girls on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a special unit for pupils with severe complex needs, which is known as Cedars 2, and worked closely with University College London in developing its provision in this unit.

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

Westfield is a good school, where the excellent care, guidance and support provided for pupils enable them to make significant improvement in their personal development. 'My child has grown successfully since joining Westfield,' is how one parent explained the impact of the school. Working closely with University College London, the school has gained national prominence for its work in recognising and addressing the weaknesses many pupils have that inhibit their ability to learn in a conventional manner. The work in Cedars 2 is already seeing a reduction in behavioural incidents and has resulted in some pupils from the special unit being able to move into other class groups.

Pupils' behaviour improves significantly in their time at the school. As a result, they focus more on their learning and usually behave well in lessons. Pupils themselves stressed how their behaviour has improved. They reported no problems with bullying and said they are very safe in school. Pupils enjoy school, and the better attendance records of so many reflect this enjoyment.

Pupils achieve well, making good progress across a range of subjects and in the specific programmes in place to enhance their ability to learn. These improvements have led to more than 20% being able to return to a mainstream school over the last ten years. In lessons, pupils usually make good progress because they respond well to staff and know what is expected of them. Teaching is effective because teachers know the pupils' different ability levels and plan work based on this knowledge. They seek to make lessons interesting, but resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) are underused. Much has been done to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs of pupils while at the same time conforming to the National Curriculum.

Under the strong leadership of its passionately committed headteacher, the school has improved since the previous inspection. It has a good range of data to analyse pupils' achievements and there are individual action plans for specific aspects of its work but these are not sufficiently coordinated to allow the school to measure and compare the impact of each development. The school's vision for its future, which involves possibly federating with a secondary school, is informed by a clear analysis of the current need for provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties within the local authority. This, together with the significant improvements the school has already made and the high quality of its current provision, shows that there is a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that where teaching is less effective, better use is made of resources, including ICT.

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- Develop the school improvement process to enable a more effective evaluation of the impact of each improvement on the quality of provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In their time at Westfield, pupils become more confident and independent and, significantly for almost all pupils, gain the ability to regulate their behaviour. They learn to control their emotions, avoid confrontations and recognise when they need 'downtime' to allow them to become calm and settled.

Although pupils' attainment is broadly average, this represents good and, for some, outstanding, progress. This applies equally to all groups in the school, including the few girls admitted. Good, and at times excellent, progress was seen in many lessons during the inspection. For example, in a one-to-one session in Cedars 2, a pupil very successfully used his thinking skills to communicate to a teacher what items of equipment were needed to plan and build a model with building blocks. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils successfully built simple circuits and independently investigated what they could do to develop these further. These lessons were similar to many others where pupils were seen to enjoy learning. Because pupils behave well towards each other, this encourages them to work together and learn effectively.

Many pupils previously had attendance issues. At Westfield, almost all have made considerable improvement and are now regular attendees. Together with the progress they make in lessons and their enhanced personal skills, this ensures that they are very well prepared for secondary education. Many successfully return to mainstream education settings. Pupils' economic well-being is enhanced by their involvement in setting the whole-school targets for behaviour and in deciding on class or whole-school rewards.

Pupils understand the importance of being healthy. They participate eagerly in physical education and at lunchtime, many choose salad and fruit. They play an important part in the school community. Both the school council and a pupil eco-council are active and make valuable contributions to school events. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is demonstrated in their contribution to the positive moral culture of the school. Evaluations carried out by University College London show significant improvements in pupils' social awareness and their understanding of morality. Responding positively to a police project on contributing to the local community, pupils earned more stickers than any other local school for completing tasks in the community and now have a far better understanding of the work of the police.

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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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

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?

Teachers and support assistants have developed positive relationships with pupils and use target setting effectively. As a result, teaching successfully engages pupils in learning. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher, helped by the support assistant, very effectively ensured that pupils achieved their targets by producing a piece of written work giving a balanced argument for and against the use of zoos. Similarly, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils eagerly engaged in a well-designed practical experiment looking at what materials may reduce sound levels. The quality of their questioning and observation demonstrated how well the teacher had enabled them to become engrossed in the work. In a very few lessons, teachers tended to talk to the pupils for too long and used a limited range of resources. Even allowing for these weaknesses, the quality of relationships ensured that learning was never less than satisfactory.

Teachers and support assistants use specialist techniques for communication and managing behaviour very well. They ensure that communication is clear and that pupils can fully understand what is expected of them. For example, in all lessons seen, terms such as 'use your stop button' and 'smart bodies' were used to reinforce the behavioural expectations within the classroom.

Assessment is both rigorous and regular. The quality of marking is very high and ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve. This high quality assessment enables teachers to track the progress of pupils and make use of the information it provides to set

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them challenging targets. The analysis of this data is also used well to inform other schools about pupils' readiness to return to mainstream education.

The school is refining its curriculum so that it is more suited to pupils' needs. Recent developments include adopting a thematic approach to some of the subjects in an effort to provide a range of interesting topics. For example, the space race is currently being used to cover aspects of history and geography. External specialists, such as a local artist and visiting sports coaches, are regularly used to add to the range of activities on offer. A good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' reading, including very effective individual withdrawal sessions with a support assistant.

Pupils' individual learning programmes are carefully planned and staff are very consistent in applying them. This is particularly so in addressing the behavioural difficulties pupils have when they arrive at the school. Specialist techniques, such as those for physically holding a pupil if the need arises, are well established because of regular and effective staff training. This helps pupils feel safe in school. Pupils' individual needs and circumstances are known well by the staff and are used sensitively to provide an appropriate level of support for each child. Work with other agencies very effectively addresses many of the issues that make pupils vulnerable outside school.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads a staff team very determined to have a positive impact on pupils' lives. This determination has involved establishing very effective partnerships with parents and carers and making excellent use of the links the school has with other schools and agencies. The work with University College London has seen significant improvement in the outcomes for pupils.

After the previous inspection, the headteacher and governors conducted a detailed evaluation of the school's effectiveness and concluded that there was a need to effect changes to improve provision. This led to the creation of a very clear and ambitious strategic vision for the school's development, which has contributed to many of the most highly effective elements of its work. At the same time, formal planning to improve detailed aspects of the school's provision is less evident. This limits the school's ability to measure the impact of each improvement on specific aspects of its work.

Governance is effective. The governing body is equally passionate about the school and governors are clear about their role. New members have recently been recruited and very good support systems are in place to induct them into their duties. Governors, like the

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senior staff team, give a high prominence to safeguarding. As a result, safeguarding is excellent and includes a very close link with the local safeguarding board and effective measures to ensure the site is secure and safe.

Much is done to ensure that all pupils can join in all aspects of the school's provision. Equality and diversity are promoted well. For example, although numbers of girls are always very low, specialist provision and support are in place to ensure equality of opportunity. Community cohesion is given careful consideration. As well as the established local links, pupils study Spanish and have annual projects on different countries.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. More than a half responded to the inspection questionnaire and this is above the national average. 'The team at Westfield are fantastic' and 'the teachers are brilliant' are very typical of comments made by parents and carers. Many report that being at Westfield has been important for their child's behaviour. For example, one parent wrote, 'Since my child started at Westfield, I have seen a big improvement in his behaviour and the school meets all his needs; my son is a much happier child.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westfield 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 31 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	37	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	58	8	42	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)	10	53	5	26	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	74	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	74	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	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.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield School, Bourne End SL8 5BE

Thank you for being so helpful when I came to your school recently. I know some of you will be able to read this letter, and I hope your parents and staff at school will help the rest of you. I very much enjoyed meeting you all and a special big 'thank you' to the school council members for being so helpful. You were all extremely polite and well behaved.

I think your school is good. I can see you enjoy being in school and that all the staff work very hard to help you. You do especially well in improving your behaviour and in contributing to the school and local communities. Staff communicate very well with your parents and the other agencies that support you and your families. I can see there are lots of activities you all enjoy taking part in. The school is very well led by your headteacher. He has developed a staff team who all work together very effectively.

To help it be even better, I have made two suggestions to the school.

- Your teachers should always help you learn by using interesting resources, including computers.
- The school development plan should have more detail so that staff know how effective they are in helping things improve.

Keep working hard and doing your best to help the school.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett Lead inspector

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