

Westgate Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124552
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359702
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Pursell
Headteacher	Howard Lee
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2007
School address	Brooklands Close Hospital Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who were accompanied for part of one day by a sign language interpreter. Inspectors observed the school's work, including that of its hearing resource base. They visited 21 lessons and observed 18 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documents including data on pupils' progress, the school's improvement planning, teachers' planning, curricular documents, pupils' records and the school's self-evaluation. They analysed 128 returned questionnaires from parents and carers, 77 from pupils and 33 from staff.

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

- How well do teachers use the information they have about different groups of pupils to plan work for them and check on their learning?
- Are standards in writing and mathematics improving and do teachers promote these effectively in all subjects?
- How well do middle managers fulfil their role and help drive the school forward?
- How does the school work to minimise the impact of later entry to Reception through its work in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1?

Information about the school

Westgate Primary is a larger-than-average primary school which has part-time Nursery provision for 52 children. It caters for pupils up to the end of Year 4. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small but increasing minority speak English as an additional language. Currently, children join the Reception class at the beginning of the term during which they have their fifth birthday. This will change from September 2011 when there will be a single point of entry at the start of the academic year. The school also manages a specialist resourced base for deaf pupils. The hearing impaired resource base currently supports eight pupils, using both spoken language and British Sign Language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, including an above average level of pupils who have statements of special educational need. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. At the time of the inspection, there were a number of new and returning staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a temporary leader. The school has a number of awards including the Football Association Chartermark and Healthy Schools status.

Westgate Whirlybirds, which includes a breakfast club, after-school club and childcare provision run by private provider, is also within the school's grounds and was inspected at the same time as the school.

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. Parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors are all proud to be part of the school, of what it achieves and how it is improving. One parent said, 'It is an amazing school. My children cannot wait to get there.' Parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaire, are unanimous in their praise for the leadership of the headteacher and his team, and the approachability of staff. Aspects of the school's work, such as the care, support and guidance provided for pupils and the ways in which the school works with partners to enrich and extend pupils' experiences and learning, are outstanding. Leaders and the governing body know the school well. They work well together, forming a strong and determined team highly focused on improving pupils' outcomes and securing the pupils' well-being. Self-evaluation is accurate. Good tracking and monitoring procedures check on pupils' progress and help teachers to match the work to pupils' needs. The school is quick to identify where it needs to improve and to introduce measures to achieve this. For example, the focus on writing has accelerated pupils' progress so that attainment is now above that expected by the time pupils leave the school. Recent initiatives in the teaching of mathematics are enthusing staff and pupils and accelerating pupils' progress in the subject. Middle managers' roles have been strengthened and they are keen to do even more. All this means that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Outcomes and progress are good because the teaching and learning are good and because resources and extra support are carefully targeted to enable all pupils to succeed. This means pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school, particularly in reading, writing and information and communication technology. Pupils attain above expected levels for their age in reading and writing despite generally having low starting points on entry to the Nursery. All groups of pupils, including those who are deaf or who have other special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. A strong focus on communicating, speaking and listening ensures good progress from the Nursery onwards, including for those who speak English as an additional language. This lays good foundations for pupils' personal and academic development throughout the school. By the time they leave the school, pupils are articulate and remarkably reflective for their age. Deaf pupils make good progress, particularly in their confidence in communicating and in their use of English and British Sign Language, because teachers and support workers work hard to ensure they have good language models and understand what is happening in lessons. Pupils' progress, which is at least satisfactory, is more variable in the Early Years Foundation Stage, because the systems are less well developed for monitoring progress, planning lessons and ensuring that all children take part in the range of activities on offer.

There is a good and rapidly improving curriculum, recently reorganised so that skills are now taught and applied through themes such as Antarctica. These really enthuse pupils

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and staff alike, so that pupils are usually highly attentive and motivated in lessons and their behaviour is good. Attendance is also good; pupils say they cannot wait to get to school because of the interesting things they do. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, over 40 pupils cycle to school.

When teaching and learning are at their best, teachers use all the information they have about pupils' progress to make the work challenging for every group in every part of the lesson. However, there is some variability in how well teachers do this. In some lessons, the balance of teacher-talk and pupil activity is inappropriate, with pupils spending too long sitting and listening on the carpet. Most teachers use skilled questioning to check on whether pupils understand, but a few do not check this sufficiently. A strong emphasis on personal and social development, understanding and awareness of others' needs supports pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Cultural development is also well supported through visits and visitors, but national links to support pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society are less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, use the information they have about pupils' achievements to plan work that challenges all groups of pupils in all parts of their lessons
 - pupils have more opportunities to be active during whole-class sessions and particularly when sitting on the carpet.
- Improve the ways in which children's progress is tracked and their learning experiences are planned in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Strengthen the ways in which the school promotes community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to have contact with and experience of other communities in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lesson observations, a study of pupils' work and the school's data confirm attainment is above average by the end of Year 4. Whatever their starting point or need, progress and achievement are good for all groups of pupils, including those in the hearing impaired resource base. This is because the school reflects carefully on its data and takes action, as it has in writing and mathematics, when progress appears to be slowing whether at individual or whole-school level. The impact of this is evident in the steadily increasing proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels by the end of Year 2. During the inspection, learning in lessons was strongest when teachers had planned for pupils of different abilities to have different work to do or different resources to support their achievement of lesson objectives. In a Year 2 English lesson, excellent questioning and good use of teaching assistants, coupled with the teacher's enthusiasm and well-targeted resources meant all pupils made an excellent start on their writing and used key vocabulary such as alliteration very well. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, good questioning, building on what pupils had learned before, meant all pupils were able to use tally charts well by the end of the lesson. Pupils join in lessons with enthusiasm and often are remarkably patient when some whole-class sessions when they are sitting on the

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carpet go on for too long. Deaf pupils too are generally very well included in lessons and demonstrate similarly good learning because teachers and teaching assistants check that they understand what to do, using sign language, as appropriate.

Pupils feel very safe in school and say that any occasional instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff. They have an excellent grasp of what might be an unsafe situation and what they can do to ensure they stay safe. They can give strong examples of how to ensure internet safety and their safety as they cycle or walk to school. They are keen to take on responsibilities around the school and to join in community and charity activities and fulfil with pride such responsibilities as helping out in other classes. The many opportunities pupils have to work together and in teams, their good behaviour and attendance, and their good basic literacy and numeracy skills set them up well for the next steps in their education and for the world of work.

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	2
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	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?

A number of initiatives have been introduced that are already improving provision. For example learning study groups in which teachers jointly observe lessons in mathematics have helped to improve teachers' confidence in teaching elements of mathematics and in sharing best practice. Although there is still some variation in the quality of teaching, almost all is now good or better and none is inadequate. Lessons are organised well and teaching assistants are carefully briefed so they make a strong contribution to pupils'

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learning, usually supporting those pupils needing additional help. In the best lessons, there are clearly thought-out opportunities for pupils to be involved in every part of the lesson and teachers have different ways of checking pupils' understanding. Good support is provided through specialist teaching in the hearing impaired resource base to enable deaf pupils to move forward in their language, literacy and numeracy skills.

The good curriculum is enriched by a host of visits and visitors which teachers use to promote pupils' understanding further. This was seen in the teacher's careful exploration with pupils in Year 2 of what they were going to learn as they set off for a nearby lakeland habitat. Deaf pupils have an appropriate emphasis on learning about deaf culture but also on more specific skills related to their needs such as British Sign Language and listening development.

Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are supported excellently through the school's strong work with other agencies and the 'extra mile' that families and other agencies say the teachers are prepared to go. Pastoral support, when pupils and families experience trauma or when a sympathetic approach is needed, is excellent. Pupils say, 'Everyone helps you here and they make you feel good about yourself.' Strong provision is made through the extra support that is provided and the ways in which the school works with other agencies for those pupils who have additional learning or other needs, including those who speak English as an additional language. Excellent systems are in place to support transition into school, whether into the Early Years Foundation Stage or other year groups at other than the usual times, and to support transfer into other schools. One deaf pupil said, 'I am not worried, I feel confident about going there, though I don't want to leave this 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	3
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 leadership team has inspired all staff, parents, carers and pupils to a shared sense of purpose that creates an ethos of understanding, mutual respect and care within the school. They are tenacious in seeking to improve the school further. The diversity of pupils' backgrounds and talents are celebrated well, securing equal opportunities for all. For example, there is careful reflection on how to include deaf pupils in all school initiatives and in all school life. This is reflected in how the whole school has embraced the use of sign language and the different technological devices used to support their listening. The governing body is well informed about the school's strengths and challenges. Very detailed reports from the headteacher, clear assignment of

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responsibilities and regular visits help governors both to challenge and champion the school.

Safeguarding arrangements are good; the school follows guidance and procedures meticulously and reviews each case well. Staff work extremely well with social care and other professionals to protect vulnerable pupils. Detailed risk assessments, an excellent range of training and very strong pastoral care systems support all staff's vigilance and understanding.

This is a highly harmonious community which celebrates each other's beliefs and differences. Pupils say, 'We are all the same, just part of the human race.' Good links with international partners, such as a school in Uganda, mean pupils at both schools are well informed about their similarities and differences. The school's work at a national level is less well developed, although it does have contact with a contrasting urban school.

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	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children's skills and experiences on entry are generally low, particularly in their social and emotional development and in communication and language. Progress in these areas is good because the Nursery and Reception day, and staffing, are arranged so that pupils have many opportunities to improve these skills. In all other areas of learning, progress is satisfactory. Attainment varies from year-to-year because of the different proportions of summer birthdays and the different levels of need in each cohort, but progress is always at least satisfactory. When children have longer Early Years Foundation Stage experiences in the school, they generally attain more. Children with additional learning needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve similar to their peers, making good strides in their communication, behaviour and early number work. Staff have high

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expectations of behaviour and promote a good understanding of right and wrong. Good arrangements for entry into the Nursery and Reception enable children to quickly settle and be prepared to 'have a go' at new experiences. Staff work well together and with Year 1 staff to promote smooth progression into the next classes.

Staff know the children well, and children's safety and well-being are well provided for. There are good resources and interesting themes planned that build well on children's interests, such as the 'pirates' theme. Although staff know children very well, the monitoring of children's progress and the different activities they do is less well developed than elsewhere in the school. This means that not all activities are as well targeted to stretch and challenge every child. Good relationships with parents and carers means that they are well informed of how well their children are progressing. The learning environment promotes children's curiosity and interest in their surroundings effectively.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The leadership is clear about what needs to happen next and, following some staffing instability, is now in a position to improve the provision further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its leadership. They are confident that the school keeps their children safe and that their children are very happy. Almost all are very happy with teaching and the progress their children have made. A very small minority would like even more information about their children's progress.

Inspectors found this to be a good school which takes very good care of pupils. Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching and learning, and the good range of learning opportunities. The school works well with parents and carers to involve them in their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westgate Community Primary 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 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 291 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	75	30	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	101	79	26	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	80	63	44	34	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	64	45	35	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	92	72	35	27	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	66	41	32	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	70	36	28	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)	82	64	39	30	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	66	41	32	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	54	52	41	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	75	59	49	38	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	96	75	32	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	97	76	29	23	1	1	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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westgate Community Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3JX

We very much enjoyed meeting you and visiting your school last week. Thank you to those of you who talked with us. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school and how much you value all the different things that your teachers do to help you to learn. You also told us how much you enjoy all the different things in and outside school that your teachers plan, such as the many visits and clubs.

You are making good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics and in your personal and social development. The teaching is good and the teachers try to make your learning interesting and fun. We were pleased to hear that you feel so safe in school and you can feel proud of your good behaviour and how well you all get on. It was good to see you taking responsibility for your own learning and for thinking about others' needs. We were very impressed with how many of you cycle to school and take part in other ways of keeping fit and healthy. We also liked the ways in which both deaf and hearing children worked together and everyone learned some sign language. Staff work very well with other people outside the school to make sure you have lots of interesting things to do and that the school continues to improve.

We have asked the headteacher and the governors to do three things in particular that would improve the school's work further.

Make the teaching even better, for example by:

- making sure that teachers plan work that is always closely linked to what you already know and what you need to learn next
- getting the teachers to think more carefully about how to involve all of you when you are all sitting on the carpet.

Improve the ways in which teachers check on how the children in the Nursery and Reception are doing.

Help you to understand even more about how different people live their lives in Britain today.

You can help too by attending school every day and continuing to listen so well in lessons

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis

Lead inspector

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