

# Westoning Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109490
<b>Local Authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	363750
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Boyle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	High Street Westoning Bedfordshire MK45 5JH
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<b>Age group</b>	5–9
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 June 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	363750

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and five teachers were seen. In addition, time was spent sampling the before- and after-school club, observing assembly and listening to pupils' read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of monitoring and self-evaluation, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' books, teachers' assessment records and displays of pupils' work. They considered questionnaire responses from 62 parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

In this smaller-than-average school, most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of the few pupils of minority ethnic heritage, none are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. An average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has National Healthy Schools status, Artsmark Silver, Activemark, Values Mark and the International Schools (Bronze) Award. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety</b>	<b>2</b>
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

## Key findings

- This is a good school that has the support of most parents and carers.
- Achievement is good. Children join the school with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age, and their attainment is above national expectations by the time they leave.
- Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage although opportunities are sometimes missed to promote their learning through open-ended topics. The school is developing the indoor and outdoor areas: both provide a satisfactory stimulus for learning.
- Progress is good in Years 1 to 4 and the school has good systems for teaching pupils to read. Standards in reading are above national expectations for six year olds and high at the end of Year 4. In recent years, pupils have done better in English than in mathematics but progress in mathematics is beginning to improve.
- Teaching is good. Teachers communicate well with pupils and have established very positive relationships with them. Staff are skilled at asking questions and provide varied and interesting activities, although these are not always matched closely enough to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a good contribution to their learning. Pupils say that they feel safe, and all the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire believe their children are kept safe at school. Most consider that behaviour is good.
- The school is led and managed well. Senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body have a shared sense of purpose. They are strongly committed to making the school as good as possible but do not always use information from monitoring as fully as they could to drive improvement. The curriculum provides many outstanding opportunities that enrich pupils' learning, promoting

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their personal development as well as extending their academic achievement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, especially in mathematics, and improve the quality of teaching by:
  - strengthening the teaching of mathematical language
  - ensuring that pupils with mathematical learning difficulties linked to literacy difficulties have individual targets that reflect this
  - matching tasks consistently to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils, and making sure that marking always informs pupils about how to improve their work
  - increasing the rigour with which leaders use information from monitoring to drive improvement.
  
- Build on recent developments to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - increasing opportunities for children to learn through exploration and taking part in open-ended projects that span a number of areas of learning
  - developing the indoor and outdoor learning environment so that it provides greater stimulation.

## Main report

The school is in the process of developing its provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage following staff changes over the last two years. Improvements have ensured that children are now making good progress during adult-led activities because staff match these well to the next steps in their development. This is helping children to gain a good knowledge of letters and sounds, and they are able to apply their understanding of the sounds which letters make well in reading and spelling simple words. The overall progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage remains satisfactory, however, because activities that staff provide at other times, and from which children choose for themselves, offer rather limited learning opportunities. Children do not have enough scope, for example, to learn through investigation and exploration or by pursuing an area of interest over a period of time. The garden area provides a high quality experience for small groups of children to 'help with the gardening', setting and tending plants that have been grown from seed in the classroom. The remainder of the outdoor and indoor learning environment provides satisfactory learning opportunities.

In recent years, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made good progress in reading and writing and reached above average standards at the end of Year 2. Their progress has been satisfactory in mathematics, where lower attaining pupils have tended to do less well, and attainment has been broadly average since the last inspection. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, their attainment is above expectations, and they do particularly well in reading and writing. Overall, progress in Years 3 and

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4 is good and there are no significant differences in the progress of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. In lessons seen, they remained on task and applied themselves well because teaching assistants' focused support and good questioning enabled them to move forward with their learning. Throughout the school, the use of 'learning logs' as part of homework, whereby pupils record everything they know about a particular topic, makes a very good contribution to their independent learning.

The school has been working to raise achievement and improve teaching in mathematics and this is beginning to bring about improvement. In mathematics lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils made good progress because tasks were matched well to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils, including the needs of lower attainers. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities applied themselves well to the exciting task of finding coins that had been hidden in sand and then worked out the sum of the coins. Average-attaining pupils worked together to find the sum of a number of different coins and more-able pupils worked independently on a suitably challenging task. All groups benefitted from the opportunity to use practical and visual resources that made the mathematical concepts easier to understand. Pupils' work shows that while progress in mathematics is improving and teachers make use of a wider range of strategies, tasks are not always matched well enough to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils. Some pupils are unclear about mathematical language and those with literacy difficulties who also struggle with aspects of mathematics do not always have individual targets that reflect this.

Teaching in English is good throughout the school and increased opportunities to write about a range of stimulating topics is helping to raise pupils' achievement and increase the motivation of boys. Exciting curriculum activities that include vivid practical experiences are increasing pupils' enthusiasm for writing, and links between different subjects provide good opportunities to write for a purpose. For instance, enacting the 'journey' of an evacuee when studying the Second World War gave rise to imaginative and thoughtfully written work. Equally, having the practical experience of making butter then eating it on slices of bread during the introduction to an English lesson in Year 3 provided pupils with a very real context for writing a series of instructions. Pupils all applied themselves well, achieved their learning objectives and more able boys produced attractive presentations using information and communication technology. There are some good opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own assessment and to evaluate each other's work, and pupils generally know their individual targets. Nevertheless, marking in English and mathematics books does not always make clear how pupils might improve their work.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Its 'values education' programme encourages pupils to understand their own feelings and those of others. The school has a warm, welcoming ethos. This was captured by a parent who described it as, 'A great village school where, due to its size, children know each other across the year groups and there's a very friendly atmosphere.'

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Work for the International Schools (Bronze) Award has given pupils a range of exciting opportunities to learn about other cultures, and to find out about life in contrasting communities, including through links with a school in Afghanistan. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their social skills: they are able communicators, get on well together and readily collaborate in lessons. The school has close links with the church and provides good opportunities for pupils to find out about a range of faiths. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong, and this contributes to their positive behaviour and readiness to contribute in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that behaviour is good but they, and some parents and carers, would like inappropriate behaviour to be dealt with more swiftly, particularly when play gets boisterous at lunchtimes. Pupils say, nevertheless, that they feel safe and that there is only a small amount of bullying, which is handled well by staff. The school has clear anti-bullying policies and procedures, and monitors bullying incidents carefully. It is exceptionally rigorous in vetting any adults who come into contact with pupils, ensures staff receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection, and is meticulous in identifying any possible risks. Staff work well with other agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The before- and after-school club, known as 'Smilers', provides good quality care. It is managed well and meets registration requirements. Staff are well trained and liaise well with teachers when planning activities. Pupils say that they enjoy spending time in the club because the activities are varied and children of different ages play happily together. They eat healthy snacks and staff pay good attention to promoting their physical and emotional well-being.

Senior leaders and members of the governing body are ambitious for the school and most of the teaching staff are highly experienced. The school has made steady improvement since the last inspection and it has a good capacity to improve further. The new headteacher has made a good start and has accurately judged the school's effectiveness. She is working productively with staff to bring about improvements, for instance, in mathematics and assessment, and is supported well by other senior leaders. The governing body is closely involved in the life of the school, particularly in its strategic development. Subject leaders make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and provide help and advice to their colleagues. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress and these help to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities. At Key Stage 1, the school is reducing the gap between attainment in reading and writing and that in mathematics, especially for less able pupils. Improvements to the curriculum are helping to reduce gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils in writing. Effective procedures are in place to tackle any discrimination. Links with other schools and organisations, and the way the school engages with parents and carers, are good. A substantial amount of monitoring takes place by senior and middle leaders, and it is clear that staff are united in their wish to improve the school. However, leaders do not always use the information from monitoring and the analysis of data rigorously enough to set consistently challenging school targets or to pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to move this from a good to an outstanding school.

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### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westoning Lower 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 137 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	41	64	22	34	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	43	67	21	33	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	31	48	26	41	6	9	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	50	24	38	7	11	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	32	50	32	50	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	30	47	32	50	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	22	34	38	59	3	5	1	2
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	20	31	32	50	5	8	1	2
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	18	28	32	50	3	5	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	27	42	34	53	1	2	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	28	44	28	44	7	11	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	25	39	30	47	5	8	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](http://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"> <li>■ The achievement of all pupils.</li> <li>■ Behaviour and safety.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of leadership and management.</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>
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.**



27 June 2011

Dear Children

### **Inspection of Westoning Lower School, Bedford, MK45 5JH**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play.

We found that Westoning Lower is a good school. The teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress. You reach higher standards than pupils do in many other schools, especially in reading and writing. The curriculum provides you with many exciting activities that bring learning to life and make you want to work hard. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe and secure. You think that behaviour is usually good, and we found that you behave well in lessons and around the school. You have good relationships with your teachers and you get on well with each other.

The headteacher, other adults and the governing body are working hard to make the school as good as possible for you. We have asked them to do the following things to help you do even better in your learning:

- to help all of you to achieve as much as you could in all lessons, especially in mathematics
- to give those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes more exciting things to do when you choose activities for yourselves inside and outside.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, coming to school regularly and always behaving well. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild  
Lead inspector

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