

Westwood First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124099
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380802
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Wiskin
Headteacher	Victoria Woollacott
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2008
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Aitken Additional Inspector

Rosemary Saunders Additional Inspector

Nicola Harwood Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Inspectors observed pupils practising their numeracy skills at an afternoon workshop attended by all year groups. They scrutinised their written work in English and mathematics and listened to individual pupils reading. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the vice-chair of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 112 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 17 staff.

Information about the school

Westwood First School is slightly larger than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two Reception classes.

A before- and after-school club (Buckingham Kids Club) and Leek Westwood Pre-school operate on the school site. Both facilities are managed by private providers and are subject to separate inspections.

The school holds several awards including International Schools (intermediate), Eco-schools Green Flag and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because there are a few variations in the quality of teaching so that pupils’ achievement is good rather than excellent and there is a relatively weaker aspect of leadership and management. Nonetheless, the school’s overall effectiveness has crossed a grade boundary since it was last inspected.
- Pupils leave Year 4 with attainment that is above average overall, and particularly so in reading. The secure command of basic skills that they acquire in Reception enables them to become confident learners. They develop their reading skills exceptionally well and make good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Some outstanding elements were observed in lessons, for example when creative approaches combined very effectively with detailed planning to promote pupils’ achievement. On a few occasions, tasks are not fully adapted to meet the needs of more-able pupils, especially in writing. Some marking does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well, work enthusiastically and have good attitudes to learning. Children in Reception settle quickly to their work and sustain their concentration to complete tasks. Pupils and their parents and carers are right to think that the school provides a safe environment where pupils thrive in their personal and social development.
- Robust monitoring systems underpin the school’s success and have enabled staff to make substantial improvements in provision. Professional development has been used well to raise pupils’ attainment and to help staff strengthen their teaching expertise. Teaching is led well and staff respond well to leaders’ strong expectations. Governance is satisfactory rather than good. Individual members make valuable contributions but, as a group, the governing body does not have a sharply defined role in monitoring and evaluating provision and in influencing

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school development planning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise achievement, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that more-able pupils in Years 1 to 4 are consistently provided with challenging work
 - ensuring that all marking enables pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the governing body develops a fuller role in monitoring provision and contributing to school self-evaluation and development planning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection findings fully endorse the view of parents and carers that pupils make good progress. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to Reception are broadly in line with national expectations. They make good progress, as interesting, challenging work is closely matched to their different levels of ability, and children are keen to explore and share knowledge. By the end of Reception, most children are attaining a little above national expectations, but girls usually achieve better than boys in literacy. This gap is closing as a result of adaptations to the curriculum.

By the end of Year 2, pupils are working typically at least a term ahead of national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In the last few years, pupils' improved attainment in Key Stage 1 has resulted, in part, from the systematic use of reading and letters and sounds (phonics) programmes. These are carefully integrated with pupils' English lessons, enhancing pupils' awareness of their use in texts, linked to characters such as The Incredible Hulk. Most pupils understand and apply terminology, such as similes and parts of speech, accurately to convey meaning. Handwriting is well formed and work is neatly presented. Lower- and middle-attaining pupils in Year 2 read competently and most blend phonemes together correctly to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils maintain this good progress consistently in Key Stage 2, especially in reading, to reach above-average levels of attainment. Year 4 pupils read confidently with expression, and possess good decoding skills for pronouncing new words and establishing meaning. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is steadily rising as they are now better able to interpret the vocabulary of word problems and they are benefiting from regular opportunities to apply their knowledge in problem solving and outdoor investigative tasks.

All groups of pupils make good progress in lessons. Consequently, there are no

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significant variations in the performance of pupils in terms of gender, ethnicity or eligibility for free school meals. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are challenged to work independently and also make good progress. For example, in an English lesson, these pupils effectively used 'talking tins' to record and check for themselves whether their sentences made sense and to decide what should be improved.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers rightly believe that pupils are taught well and their children agree. Reception staff's methodical and challenging questioning enables more-able children to think hard and construct plausible hypotheses, for example with reference to many-sided shapes. There is not always such sharp challenge for more-able pupils in Years 1 to 4.

Teachers' planning usually focuses sharply on the new knowledge or skills they expect pupils to acquire by the end of the lesson. Most teachers select tasks to ensure all groups are challenged. They make purposeful use of oral feedback to check and extend pupils' learning. Their good expectations for pupils' progress and behaviour promote a positive climate for learning, fostering secure relationships and pupils' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

In the outstanding lessons, teachers make expert use of a variety of creative, pictorial resources and methods to motivate and stretch pupils and encourage independence. This was demonstrated in a Key Stage 1 lesson where pupils, having considered the unforeseen consequences of their (pretended) actions, successfully re-enacted a role-play making the 'right choices'. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, expert teaching enabled pupils to make full use of their word-banks to write convincing accounts of a trip to Cadbury World. Imaginative trails were planned for the numeracy workshop based round the Olympic theme, enabling pupils to carry out successfully a wide variety of investigations. Reading skills are taught well, enabling pupils to extract key information and identify shades of meaning. Teachers brief other adults fully in the planning and organisation of lessons to ensure little time is wasted. Teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs skilfully, for example in making extensive use of information and communication technology and other visual aids to enable pupils to acquire a more accurate understanding of fractions and through pre-teaching vocabulary to support them in their topic work.

On a few occasions, teaching is only satisfactory, for example when planning does not define intended gains in pupils' knowledge and skills for all groups. This restricts challenge, especially for more-able pupils. The analyses of pupils' work revealed that pupils have regular opportunities for extended writing but that tasks are not always adapted sharply to extend more-able pupils. Marking varies in quality. While some pupils receive constructive feedback which helps them understand how they can reach the next level, marking for other pupils is limited to encouraging comments.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' industrious approach and positive attitudes towards their learning underpin their good achievement and well-being in school. Reception children gain an early understanding of friendship values and a sense of responsibility for keeping classroom resources tidy. Pupils support each other very effectively in paired-partner routines or in group tasks. They show sufficient self-confidence to volunteer to sit in the 'hot seat' to answer questions. A very few younger pupils with less developed social skills sometimes find it difficult to maintain their concentration, and teaching assistants have to work hard to sustain their focus. Similarly, on a few occasions, when not engaged directly by teachers' questioning, pupils are compliant rather than animated. Pupils report that their classmates respect the school rules and that this is an important factor in their sense of security in school. They respond favourably to opportunities in lessons to reflect on their emotions and to incentives for good behaviour, welcoming the chance to sit at the 'golden table' during lunchtimes. They behave well not only in lessons but in public areas including assemblies. Inspectors also found behaviour over time to be good, as reflected in the extremely rare occurrence of exclusions or other untoward incidents in the school's comprehensive records.

Every parent or carer who answered the questionnaire said that pupils feel safe, and nearly all reported that behaviour is good. Pupils endorse these comments and inspection evidence supports these views. Pupils say that any form of bullying is rare and is restricted to name-calling following a few heated arguments during play. Pupils have an informed understanding of the school's procedures for ensuring their safety and are aware of self-help strategies for staying safe. They are fully confident that adults in school care about them and that adults would intervene promptly to offer any necessary support. Pupils value the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility and can detail the effective contribution made by their fellows in these positions as school- and eco-councillors and as playground buddies. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance.

Leadership and management

Accurate school self-evaluation is based on regular, thorough monitoring, evaluation and review procedures conducted by staff at all levels. The strength of these systems, which are now firmly embedded in its work, has enabled the school to improve the quality of provision and maintain continuity despite considerable changes in staffing. Leaders have clear expectations for pupils' progress and have been successful in establishing accountability across the staff for ensuring the substantial improvement in pupils' attainment is maintained. Pupils' progress is tracked efficiently and challenging targets are mostly met or exceeded. Professional development is carefully aligned with planning and has been used very effectively to enable staff to implement well-considered initiatives and to share expertise with less experienced new staff.

The curriculum promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural

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education well. Leaders have successfully tackled areas of weakness identified at the last inspection, including the need to extend pupils' multi-cultural awareness, by channelling efforts in active pursuit of the international award. Some aspects of this are integrated within pupils' topic work, and pupils make good use of opportunities for active communication with their counterparts in African countries.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and adapted well to support pupils' good achievement. Leaders tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunity in learning very effectively and ensure no group underachieves. This is clearly reflected in classroom practice, for example through staff deploying themselves to attend to each group in turn and by unobtrusively ensuring that both boys and girls are equally involved in role-playing scenarios. Safeguarding arrangements reflect a high level of awareness of their responsibilities on the part of senior staff, are monitored assiduously and meet current requirements. Individual members of the governing body carry out useful tasks, for example in liaising with subject leaders to discuss aspects of teaching and learning. The governing body as a whole is less actively involved in analysing and monitoring pupils' achievements and in exerting an influence in this respect in shaping school self-evaluation and development planning.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood First School, Leek, ST13 8DL

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires some of you completed. Yours is a good school, which has improved since it was last inspected.

- You are taught well from Reception to Year 4 and this helps you to reach above-average levels of attainment by the end of Year 4. You achieve well and make excellent progress in developing your reading skills.
- You told us you feel safe and showed us you know several ways of keeping safe in problem situations. You behave well and are keen to support each other in lessons.
- The school is led well. Senior leaders work hard to ensure you are supported effectively in your learning. They make good plans to improve your education.

We have asked the staff to do the following things to help you achieve even better.

- Make sure that all lessons are planned carefully to stretch those of you who find learning easier.
- Ensure that all marking guides you clearly on how you can improve your work.

We have also asked the governing body to play a more active role in checking up on the school's work and shaping its future.

You can help by telling your teachers any time you are set work that is too easy, and always taking care to follow the helpful advice that teachers give you when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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