

Westlands School

Eltham Crescent, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 9RA

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few pupils make expected progress in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Teachers do not give them enough chances to write longer pieces of work in all subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently provide pupils with information about how they can improve and extend their work.
- Subject leaders are not rigorous or consistent enough in their checking of pupils' work to identify accurately weaknesses.

The school has the following strengths

- The high expectations of the leadership team have been very successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching. The good teaching is accelerating pupils' progress particularly in reading and mathematics to help overcome their past underachievement. Subsequently, this has improved the school's performance considerably.
- The knowledgeable and effective governing body provide good support and challenge.
- Good teaching and very positive relationships with staff engage and motivate pupils to learn.
- Good systems are in place to ensure pupils' progress is rigorously checked and this links in well with individual pupil targets and improving achievement.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through an exciting curriculum that offers stimulating activities and good opportunities for personal growth.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learn have improved rapidly and are now good. The school has the safety and well-being of all pupils as its priority. Highly effective communication with parents contributes significantly to pupils' good behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons and part lessons taught by 12 teachers.
- The heads of provision conducted two joint observations of teaching with inspectors.
- The inspectors carried out three learning walks during six lessons at both sites to observe behaviour, the school environment and reading.
- The inspection team had discussions with the executive headteacher, both heads of provision, teachers, members of the governing body, pupils, senior leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team looked at the work of the school, including pupils' behaviour and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to help plan the inspection. The inspector formally met a group of parents during the school day to seek their views.

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janice Stephenson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westlands caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. More than a third of the pupils have additional moderate learning difficulties. Pupils join this school at different points throughout their school life, many having had a disrupted education and often lacking the emotional and social skills needed for their learning.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils attend from across the borough of Stockton-on-Tees. A well-above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of service families).
- The vast majority of pupils are boys of White British origin.
- There were no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection.
- The school is a part of the Stockton Borough First Federation and a partner with Abbey Hill School and College. It has recently applied for academy status.
- The school is on two sites with two heads of provision (one each for the primary and secondary phases of education) responsible to an executive headteacher.
- The primary site at Green Gates in Stockton-on-Tees is co-located with the local authority's primary pupil referral unit and the secondary site is in Thornaby.
- A new head of secondary provision was appointed in September 2012.
- The school has residential provision for 15 pupils which was inspected in November 2012. This report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school works in partnership with ASPIRE and Thornaby Enterprise Centre to give pupils additional vocational experience.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - continuing to focus on improving teachers' expectations for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing in all subjects
 - helping pupils by telling them how to improve their work to achieve higher levels
 - ensuring that subject leaders' monitoring is consistent in rigorously and accurately evaluating the quality of work in books in order to identify areas of weakness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement.

- While pupils have been making expected progress in reading and mathematics, in the recent past, too few pupils made expected progress in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. This is why achievement requires improvement. Inspection evidence shows that the school is firmly tackling past underachievement and the signs of success show themselves in the fact that boys are now better engaged in their learning than they were before. Pupils now talk enthusiastically about their work in lessons, a sign of how much they are enjoying their learning.
- The school's own records show that achievement required improvement in 2011 and during 2012 it accelerated. This is because of the improvements in leadership, teaching and assessment. With a new curriculum now in place, the school's predictions for a continuing rise in standards this year are built on firm foundations.
- A good proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and who are known to be eligible for free school meals increase their levels of attainment in line with national expectations by the time they leave Year 11 because of the high quality interventions and opportunities for individual support. The small number of girls is making good progress from their starting points because they receive good support for their transition from the primary to the secondary provision. The strong focus on developing their literacy and numeracy skills supports their good engagement and emotional capacity to learn.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read in different subjects. Reading programmes have improved pupils' skills and their confidence and progress is good. However, there is not a sufficiently strong enough focus on writing to support better achievement throughout the school.
- Since the last inspection, the oldest pupils are now much better prepared for the next stage in their education. They have gained certificates in English and mathematics, GCSE examinations and equivalent courses such as digital photography, hospitality and fishing. Pupils are accessing a broad range of other options at college, to gain qualifications through work experience at vocational centres, such as in plastering, bricklaying and carpentry. This has improved their attendance, levels of maturity and self-confidence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is now good and contributing strongly to improving achievement. Teachers and support staff are extremely good at meeting the social, emotional and behavioural needs of all pupils. The well-trained staff use effective strategies to enable pupils to manage their own behaviour so that they quickly re-engage in their lessons. This has resulted in much improved behaviour and better learning.
- Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure lessons are interesting and motivate pupils' learning. Pupils, therefore, respond well to the teaching and have good relationships with the staff.
- The best lessons are well planned, resources chosen well and objectives clearly communicated. This supports pupils' good involvement with what they are doing and keeps the pace of learning brisk.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and check their learning regularly in lessons. Pupils have targets, and in lessons are clear about the level of their work and how to take the next steps in their learning. However, there is a lack of consistency across the school in giving pointers to pupils on how they can improve their work in their books.
- The curriculum has an increasingly positive effect on pupils' achievement because new courses are better matched to individual pupil's needs and give greater opportunities to continue them into college. However, not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities to allow pupils to

produce extended pieces of writing in all subjects to deepen their understanding and ability to write at length and so raise their achievement.

- Many pupils are lacking in confidence and self-belief. The introduction of rugby, a wide range of exciting outdoor activities and sports, has reinvigorated pupils. They have experienced success and gained in their personal development from working in teams and helping each other. This is translating into success in their learning, with better attitudes to working hard and doing well.
- There are good opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues. This was seen in a school assembly where pupils were talking about Moses, Aaron and the Pharaoh. This occasion significantly developed their understanding well of 'Never giving up when you believe in something'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The high expectations of leaders and the excellent demonstration by all adults in the correct ways to behave, contributes to pupils feeling safe at all times. Behaviour has rapidly improved and is now good. This is reflected in their impeccable behaviour on the rugby tour, which included other activities, such as zip-wiring and abseiling.
- Pupils fully respect the staff and others and friendly relationships are seen throughout the school day. Pupils are thoughtful of each other in lessons and often use humour in their discussion with staff around the school.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good in their lessons and any disruptions are quickly dealt with by their teachers. Indeed, good behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection and around the school.
- Parents and pupils agree that the school keeps them safe. One parent said, 'The school has made such a difference. He knows what to do to stay calm. I have a nice son now and I am proud of him. This school communicates well with you, I feel involved.' The regular anti-bullying sessions give pupils a good understanding of aggressive behaviour and what is harassment. This has minimised bullying in the school, which is dealt with very efficiently.
- The school has developed strong relationships with parents and agencies to meet pupils' needs. This is seen in the high quality pastoral work of the heads of provision, designated teachers and staff in the residential care.
- The marked improvement in pupils' attitudes and the highly effective systems for encouraging regular attendance has made sure that attendance has improved.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher provides a clear vision for the school's continuous improvement. This is shared by two dynamic heads of provision who are all ambitious to see the school move forward. Together, with the strong governance of the school, they have good capacity for making continued improvements. However, pupils' achievement still requires improvement, more especially in writing. This is because the way middle leaders check pupils' work is not yet rigorous enough to spot areas of weakness, for example, in teachers' marking. Added to which there is a legacy of underachievement that the school is working hard to remedy.
- Senior leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate and the findings of the school's review process are used well to make things even better. For example, there has been a significant reduction in serious behavioural incidents and the pupils' behaviour is now good.
- The leadership team has a strong focus on teaching and learning. Working closely with the governing body, they have been purposeful in their actions to improve the quality of teaching and make sure that what is learnt from checks on teachers' performance is used to determine what training and salaries staff should have.

- Pupils, staff and parents feel they are valued in the school community. The school's atmosphere and beliefs promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination promptly.
 - Safeguarding procedures are very effective and supported by rigorous checks and vetting. Strong partnerships and support professionals work extremely well and ensure families are sensitively helped.
 - The new curriculum provides a good range of courses for pupils to gain qualifications. The introduction of the hospitality course has led to a high level of involvement of older boys, with a marked increase in the pride they have in their work. The courses provided are designed to be exciting and successfully provide opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, communities and religions. The batik topic generated some exciting artwork from a culture other than their own and the Eco club is developing a better understanding of the local environment.
 - The school benefits from being part of a federation where sharing good practice is common. This sharing has maximised the use of resources and provided high quality professional development. The local authority has a high regard for the informal support the school provides to the pupil referral unit and has provided advice to support the school's self-evaluation.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a passionate commitment to the school and its pupils. They provide good support and know its strengths and weaknesses. This is apparent in their understanding of the rapid progress made in improving attendance and ensuring good teaching. The governors recognised that progress in the secondary provision had been slow since the last inspection. Together with the executive headteacher, they identified the need to strengthen leadership to accelerate improvements and complement the good quality primary provision. The recent appointment of a head of provision in September 2012 for the secondary provision has successfully resulted in rapid improvements in key areas of provision.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111782
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	405359

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Whittaker
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Horne (Executive Headteacher), Mrs Anita Amos (Head of Primary Provision), Mr Peter Ewart (Head of Secondary Provision)
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
Telephone number	01642 883030
Fax number	01642 883070
Email address	westlands@stockton.sch.uk

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