

Westfield School

Westfield Walk, Leominster, HR6 8HD

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
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 good school

- Almost all pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well. Achievement in reading is particularly good. Pupils achieve well in literacy, numeracy and in their personal development.
- Good teaching means that most pupils make good progress in their activities. In the best teaching, staff challenge pupils well so that they extend their knowledge and understanding.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students' achievement has improved because of the very high quality of provision and the excellent opportunities for them to acquire accreditation and vocational experiences.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are safe and secure at school.
- Pupils benefit from many exciting learning experiences and have access to good quality resources, which engage them well.
- Pupils are well cared for. An effective range of therapies contribute very well to their learning and welfare.
- Parents are rightly pleased with their children's education.
- Efficient planning by the governing body means money is spent well for the benefit of all groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for additional funding.
- Leadership and management are good. The senior leaders have a clear vision and place a high focus on improving the performance of staff through rigorous monitoring and high quality training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons pupils are not challenged well enough to ensure they make the progress expected of them because too much turn-taking results in pupils waiting too long for their turn.
- The provision for the few higher-attaining pupils with challenging autism-spectrum disorders does not always meet their needs and abilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, all of them jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a few short visits to observe pupils' learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the pupil council, a local authority representative, the music therapist, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of the school's own parent survey because there were too few responses to the on-line survey (Parent View). A telephone conversation was held with a parent during the inspection. The inspector also took account of 12 responses to the inspection questionnaire from staff.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westfield is a small special school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. About a third of pupils have autism-spectrum disorders and a small number are higher-attaining pupils with challenging autism.
- There are a very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are no children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The sixth form has its own separate accommodation and students spend some of their time at local work-related providers such as a farm and the library.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and several members of the governing body are new to their roles since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school by:
 - reducing the amount of turn-taking in lessons so that the pace of pupils' learning improves
 - making sure that teachers provide sufficient challenge so that pupils do more in the time allowed.
- Improve provision for the small proportion of higher-attaining pupils with challenging autism-spectrum disorders by:
 - increasing appropriate training for staff
 - making sure that resources and the accommodation fully meet these pupils' individual needs and abilities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well during their time at Westfield. As a result, they make at least good progress in literacy and numeracy and in their personal development. They make particularly good progress in reading because of very effective strategies and resources. Students achieve a wide range of accreditation by the time they leave the sixth form.
- The positive focus placed on the development of reading skills was evident in Years 7 to 9 where pupils searched for information about different animals in a text they were sharing. They scanned pages quickly as they tried to be the first to find answers. Several could read simple text fluently and with expression. Others used their knowledge of phonics (matching letters and sounds) to attempt new words.
- Very occasionally pupils are not challenged well enough in their lessons because there is too much turn-taking and they are required to wait too long for a turn. At these times the pace of their learning dips and they do not achieve enough in the time allowed.
- Students in the sixth form achieve exceptionally well. This was evident during an enterprise activity in which they were successfully learning about 'giving change.' They were practising in preparation for a plant sale that they were holding to raise their own funds for their annual residential trip. They talked excitedly about past trips to Cornwall and the Isle of Man where they stayed in youth hostels catering for themselves.
- Pupils' communication skills are promoted well by staff. They encourage pupils to talk to each other about their work and to talk aloud to their class. Where signs and symbols are required to ensure greater understanding, they are used well, enabling pupils to have their say and take part actively in discussions. Pupils told the inspector that they were involved in making decisions and choosing tasks.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils because the extra funding is used to employ additional staffing and to fund additional activities, such as extra music therapy to meet these pupils' needs.
- Parents are rightly pleased with their child's progress. 'I cannot find the words to express how well the school has supported my child. He has improved tremendously in the past three years. I receive regular emails, any worries are quickly alleviated and communication is fantastic,' commented a parent.

The quality of teaching is good

- In almost all lessons teachers provide exciting activities that fully engage pupils in learning. Positive relationships result in calm and productive lessons.
- Tasks are almost always well planned and organised and there are clear routines that mean pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers make sure that pupils help with simple jobs including the organisation and giving out small items such as books or scissors.
- In the best lessons, teachers extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through focused

questions that challenge them to search for answers. An example of this was in Years 10 and 11 where pupils were learning how to undertake interviews as part of a 'Comic Relief' activity. Pupils really enjoyed watching a mock interview given by the teacher to a pretend 'pop star'. They watched intently and were enthused to try interviewing for themselves. Excellent support and questioning meant that they developed good interviewing techniques, improving their self-confidence and their speaking skills.

- Good teaching in mathematics was evident in Years 3 to 6 where pupils were learning about two-dimensional shapes. They counted the different shapes and completed tally charts quickly, trying to find more shapes than the other pupils in their group. Just occasionally the pace of learning dips because teachers do not provide sufficient challenge due to too much turn-taking.
- Outstanding teaching in the sixth form means that students make the best possible progress and enables them all to acquire good quality accredited qualifications by the time they leave.
- Teachers are skilled in the teaching of reading and in all aspects of caring for pupils and keeping them safe. They receive good quality training but not all staff have yet received training in strategies to teach more-able pupils with challenging autism-spectrum disorders. As a result, teaching for this small group is not quite as strong as for other groups of pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well through music, dance, drama, stories and celebrations from different cultures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils come to school joyfully each morning, eagerly looking to see what is on offer. They told the inspector that they feel safe at school and that they know how to keep safe in the community. They said that they have lots of friends and they show this by getting on well together.
- No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection and records show that any teasing is quickly dealt with by staff. Older pupils said that everyone at the school is kind.
- Pupils show their enjoyment of school by the way they attend regularly. Attendance is rising and is now above that found in most similar schools.
- Staff manage behaviour well and pupils and parents rightly say that behaviour is good. Pupils regularly engage in activities to help others and there are many examples of pupils taking care of others, helping them with their learning or sharing their tasks together.
- The wide range of additional activities planned by the school has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and on their behaviour. For example those pupils who are able to access offsite provision such as to a local farm return to school often covered in mud but full of enthusiasm about what they have achieved during the day.
- The wide range of work-related opportunities in real businesses, such as the farm, the library, a builder's yard and local shops often provide older pupils in Years 10 to 12 with real employment. These experiences are having a very positive impact on their personal development and helping to prepare them extremely well for their futures.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have successfully improved teaching and achievement despite the relatively short time they have worked together. They have been well supported by staff and the governing body. Effective use of the 'Teachers' Standards' shows their strong commitment to improving teachers' skills so that they can progress and seek promotion.
- Leaders have made sure that staff have the skills necessary to keep pupils safe and help them make the best possible progress. For example, effective training in the teaching of reading is having a big impact on pupils' improvements in that area. Training for staff on the use of signs and symbols has meant that pupils always have a way to communicate. Leaders have rightly planned additional training to meet the needs of the higher-ability pupils with challenging autism-spectrum disorders in the near future.
- Performance is effectively managed by senior leaders and is rigorously monitored. Regular observations of teaching and learning, both by leaders and the local authority, mean that there is a very clear and accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school, especially in training and in supporting the wide range of needs of the pupils.
- The school promotes good relationships with parents, local schools, support agencies and a wide range of work-related providers.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities as demonstrated by the high proportion of pupils who benefit from individual support and the full inclusion on trips, visits and work-related experiences and accreditation.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides clear direction to the school, promoting an atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Governors regularly challenge and support leaders and are fully involved in checking the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They know about the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. Governors understand the importance of managing the performance of staff and they make sure that there are sufficient funds to provide the training to improve teaching further. They manage the school's finances well and make sure that money allocated to support pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is used for the benefit of those pupils. Governors make sure that good teachers and staff are rewarded through the school's performance management structure and that any underperformance is improved through additional training and mentoring.

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	117055
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	405682

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June French
Headteacher	Nicki Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2010
Telephone number	01568 613147
Fax number	01568 616848
Email address	admin@westfield.hereford.sch.uk

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