

Westley Middle School

Oliver Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3JB

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Since the school became an academy, pupils in all year groups have made good progress in English and mathematics. The longer pupils stay at the school, the better the progress they make.
- Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 in mathematics, dipped to below the national average, pupils' attainment in Year 6 in English and mathematics is now above national averages.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 8 was above expectations for their age in 2012 and is on track to be so again in 2013.
- Pupils who attend the hearing impaired unit make good progress, particularly because they are included as much as possible in whole school activities.
- The teaching is good and, at times, outstanding. Teachers use a broad range of interesting activities to keep the pupils engaged in learning.
- Teachers understand the way their pupils learn, plan lessons accordingly, and question pupils well to check their understanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and school are exemplary. They work very well together in groups and pairs, and help each other to learn.
- Pupils' social and personal development is outstanding. They take responsibility for their own and each other's behaviour.
- School leaders at all levels, including senior leaders, subject leaders, and governors, share a firm commitment to the school and have helped to bring about considerable improvements in achievement and teaching, since the academy was set up.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, pupils are not given opportunities to work on their own, find things out for themselves and think creatively.
- Pupils are not given the same variety of opportunities to practice their numeracy skills as they are their literacy skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons or part lessons. Nine lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders and managers.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff, and the headteacher from County Upper School.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school’s documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. They observed the school’s work, looked at pupils’ books and the tracking system used to monitor pupils’ progress.
- Inspectors considered the 70 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and the 18 responses to questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Asker	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westley is an average sized middle school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. Similarly, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for the end of Year 6, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A small number of pupils attend Mill Meadow Pupil Referral Unit on a part time basis.
- The school is part of the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust, along with Horringer Court Middle School, Barrow Primary School and County Upper School.
- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school Westley Middle School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment, attended by four pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
 - more lessons inspire pupils to be creative
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Improve achievement by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across all subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' prior attainment on entry to Westley Middle School is average in English and below average in mathematics. Boys' attainment on entry is generally lower than girls. Pupils make good progress over four years so that, by the time they leave, both boys and girls are reaching standards in most subjects that are above expectations for their age, particularly in English.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were average in English and below average in mathematics in 2012. Results in writing were better than for reading. The progress of the current Year 6 pupils shows that they are on target to achieve better results this year, particularly in mathematics, with increasing proportions set to gain the higher Level 5 in both subjects.
- The school has been successful in improving reading in Years 5 and 6. It has reviewed the way it measures pupils' progress in reading, so teachers can quickly put programmes into place if pupils are at risk of underachievement. As a result, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made outstanding progress in reading. Pupils who failed to reach national expectations in Year 6 and are in receipt of the new Year 7 catch-up funding, make good progress in small reading groups.
- Disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in all subjects because skilled staff are well deployed, and use appropriate materials, to support them.
- Pupils who attend the hearing impaired unit make good progress because the support they receive means they are confident, happy, and settle in well on arrival. Pupils who attend the pupil referral unit progress well because the programme provided is set at the right level for them.
- The school has been very effective in reducing the attainment gap for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school's data indicate that, in 2012, the attainment of these pupils in Year 8 was equal to that of other pupils in English and was two terms behind in mathematics. In 2013 the school has been most effective in reducing the attainment gap in Years 5 and 8. Good use is made of the extra pupil premium funds, for example, to provide small-group tuition in mathematics for Year 5 pupils.
- Progress has improved in mathematics, particularly for middle-ability pupils, and the more-able, but not to the same extent as in reading. Numeracy activities are being introduced in registration, but opportunities to develop numeracy skills effectively across all subject areas are sometimes missed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations and have developed positive relationships with pupils so there is a good climate for learning in classes. Pupils appreciate regular and consistent marking which tells them how well they have done.
- Teachers use a good range of approaches to engage and motivate pupils, including work in pairs and in groups, role play, videos, computers and research. In one outstanding art lesson, pupils made excellent progress experimenting with 'ipads' to draw in the style of David Hockney.

- Pupils are excited by their learning because teachers choose materials and subjects which are interesting and local to them. For example, pupils in a Year 8 music lesson made rapid progress because of their fascination with comparing the forms of Gregorian chant to a local Suffolk ballad.
- Learning typically moves at a brisk pace. When pupils complete a task or activity they are encouraged to move swiftly on to the next stage. A Year 6 pupil in a geography lesson said, 'It's exciting. The next activity is always fun, and if we stop, it's to think, we never do nothing.'
- Teachers are very good at providing opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy skills in all subjects. It is regularly made clear to pupils in lessons how the activities are going to make their knowledge and understanding in reading and writing better.
- Pupils with a hearing impairment are taught well. Teachers are expert in using teaching strategies which challenge hearing impaired pupils, and are given the right equipment to do so.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils learn well. For example, the excellent subject knowledge of the teacher in a Year 8 lesson meant that pupils quickly increased their understanding of quadratic equations. In subjects other than mathematics, teachers are not always confident enough to build into lessons, opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of numeracy.
- In the best lessons, pupils are given the chance to work on their own, make choices about their learning, and think creatively about the subject. In some lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with the chance to do this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is a very calm, friendly and welcoming place. Pupils are consistently courteous and polite to visitors and very proud of their school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, and they see it as their responsibility to behave well in class. Pupils who are house captains constantly check how good the behaviour of pupils in their house is, and are trained to counsel any pupils who they feel are letting the house down. One Year 7 pupil said, 'Everyone wants to behave their best, to make sure their house is the best.'
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is exemplary. They follow rules automatically, for example, understanding when they can play on the field, and they do not have to be reminded. They organise themselves into rotas for playing tennis at break-time. In assemblies, they listen and participate very well, and appreciate the achievements of their friends.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue, and if there are instances of bullying, they are dealt with immediately. The school community was described by a Year 8 pupil as one where, 'we know bullying is unkind, and we just don't do it.'
- The school is extremely successful at bringing about improvements for pupils who find it difficult to behave well. The school works in close partnership with primary schools to improve pupils'

behaviour before they even arrive at Westley Middle.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Pupils relish taking on a range of responsibilities which involve them looking after their peers. For example, the role of peer mentor is highly sought after and considered prestigious. One peer mentor said, 'Our job is to make sure there is always someone there to help. It is a very important one.'

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team are effective at identifying any weaknesses in teaching or achievement, and taking swift action to address the weaknesses successfully. For example, this year extra mathematics and English teachers were recruited to help improve attainment in mathematics and reading at Key Stage 2.
- The hearing impaired unit is well led and managed because its staff work closely with staff in the rest of the school to make sure hearing impaired pupils have a consistently good experience of learning.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. It is linked well to the school development planning priorities and the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust improvement plan.
- All staff share the senior leaders' vision for the school's future. Of the staff who responded to the staff questionnaire, all said they were proud to be a member of the school.
- All members of staff participate in an effective appraisal process. There is a clear link between progression up the pay scale and the quality of teaching. All teachers have a target for improving their pupils' literacy skills, and precise targets with a strong focus on pupils' progress. Teachers understand their role in making sure that each pupil achieves as well as possible. The school is planning to introduce targets which focus on numeracy across the curriculum.
- The schools in the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust work together to provide joint training for staff and governors. The trust has employed a 4-19 co-ordinator who has helped to improve the consistency of mathematics teaching across all the schools. The primary and high school work alongside Westley Middle to look closely at the quality of pupils' work and to make sure that staff agree on the levels awarded to individual pupils. This helps to confirm the accuracy of the school's information on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 5 and 8.
- The curriculum is a strength. Pupils appreciate lessons which are linked to 'real life' experiences. For example, in a science lesson pupils enjoyed working out how their experiment linked to iris and DNA recognition.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. All pupils access a full range of out-of school activities which are often run by themselves, or former pupils now at the high school. Pupils explained that if there was not a particular club available that they were interested in, then they were encouraged to set one up.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring experience to their role and benefit from the expertise available through the

joint governance arrangements of the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust. As a consequence, they are well trained and have a clear view about the quality of teaching in the school, what needs to improve, and how to understand what data tells them about progress in a middle school. They are kept well informed by the headteacher, and hold leaders to account through challenging questions and school visits. Governors ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are well managed and that the pupil premium funds are used effectively for eligible pupils. They are aware of the performance management processes and how progress up the pay scale is linked to teachers' performance.

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	137180
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	411988

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Natalie Sinadurai
Headteacher	Nick Templeton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01284 755144
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