

Westfield School

Chester Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 4HW

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, do not have a good understanding of the quality of provision or the progress pupils make. They have not secured a good quality of education for pupils.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe but do not demonstrate best practice. There is an open and safe culture, but the system for recording concerns centrally needs to be strengthened.
- Absence rates have been high since at least 2015. They remain high and leaders are not taking effective action to reduce them.
- Pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' work is often poorly presented and some pupils waste time in lessons.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make less progress than they should in key stages 2 and 3, especially in writing.
- Teachers do not consistently support pupils' development of mathematical reasoning well in key stages 2 and 3. While they learn mathematical concepts, pupils do not routinely learn how to use them well.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are too low and some do not plan work which interests pupils. Teachers often allow pupils' misconceptions to persist, particularly in writing. This slows pupils' progress.
- Early years provision does not cater well for all areas of learning. While children's numeracy skills are well developed, for example, their early writing skills are not. Leaders are not secure in their understanding of the quality of education in the early years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' understanding of difference is well developed. Pupils treat each other with respect. They say that bullying is rare and well managed.
- Phonics is well taught through the early years and key stage 1.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are well taught. They typically make good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils in the 'Hive' provision are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - implementing systems to accurately monitor and improve the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching they receive
 - improving leaders' understanding of the quality of education in the early years
 - developing the leadership of safeguarding so that all the safeguarding information about pupils is kept centrally
 - developing a secure understanding of levels of attendance and of why they are low so that effective actions can be taken to improve attendance
 - ensuring that governors hold senior leaders rigorously to account for the quality of provision.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress by:
 - making sure teachers plan the use of lesson time well so that pupils consistently have work which interests them and helps them to make good progress
 - making sure teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they present their work
 - ensuring that teachers in key stages 2 and 3 teach pupils to write well and apply their mathematical reasoning skills
 - making sure that teachers consistently identify and act on pupils' misconceptions so that they do not persist, especially in writing
 - developing teaching in the early years so that children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and personal development by:
 - teaching them the skills of effective learners so that they consistently take pride in their work and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning
 - ensuring that pupils attend school regularly so that attendance is at least in line with the national average.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are not aware of where teaching is most and least effective and do not have a strategic plan in place to improve areas of weakness. They have an inaccurate assessment of the progress pupils make across the school. Leaders' perception that pupils make accelerated progress through Year 5 in writing, for example, is incorrect.
- Leaders do not have a clear rationale for some setting arrangements in the school. They do not give due thought to the impact this setting might have on some pupils and do not evaluate its impact effectively. The progress and behaviour in some classes is negatively affected by these arrangements.
- Leaders' understanding of attendance levels is inaccurate. They are not confident in interpreting their own statistics and were not able to show inspectors a clear overview of attendance or persistent absence. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the impact of their work to improve attendance, or a secure understanding of why attendance is low. As a consequence, low levels of attendance remain a concern.
- The school is currently undergoing a period of significant change as it converts from a middle school to a primary school. Some aspects of this changed provision work well, such as teaching in Years 1 and 2, which typically secures pupils' good progress. However, there is still work to do to make sure all aspects of the primary school are good. Leaders do not have a secure understanding of how to teach children most effectively to secure their development across the different areas of early years learning. This means that while children make good progress in some areas of learning, such as numeracy, their progress in other areas, such as writing, requires improvement.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities is not having as much of an impact as it should. Leaders meet regularly to discuss the different needs of pupils. They identify areas where individuals are not doing as well as they could and put extra support in place for those pupils. There is a range of extra help on offer to pupils, such as a handwriting club and a homework club. Leaders track the impact of this extra help and tailor what is offered accordingly. This means that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not fall behind others in the school. However, this extra work does not make up for the aspects of teaching which are not strong. As a consequence, these significant groups of pupils make less progress than pupils nationally.
- Some pupils who join Year 7 with low starting points make good progress in writing and catch up with their peers in school. However, this is not the case in reading and mathematics, where they make less progress than others.
- The teaching of phonics is well developed through the newer parts of the school. Leaders have adopted a consistent approach across the early years and key stage 1. Pupils' phonic understanding is developing well as a result. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are improving and are now above the national averages.

- Pupils in the on-site specialist provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported. Their individual needs are well considered and catered for. Their progress is well tracked and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have been particularly successful in promoting equality. Pupils respect one another and understand that people are different but equal. The school recognises and celebrates difference. As a consequence, pupils who spoke with inspectors were confident that everyone is treated the same. All pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they were encouraged to treat others with respect.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the challenges which face the school as it moves into becoming a primary school. They are aware of some of the factors which are impeding pupils' progress, such as the impact of pupils' reading skills on their ability to interpret mathematics questions. They take the time to review progress data and to understand the information leaders provide to them regarding the quality of provision in the school. However, because leaders' understanding of the progress pupils make is not accurate, nor is that of governors. They do not have systems in place to accurately challenge what they are being told or to hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. There is an open culture where staff, pupils and governors know what to do if they have any concerns. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, as does a named governor. Staff know how to recognise if a pupil is at risk of harm and follow clear procedures for passing their concerns on. Leaders act on information they receive from outside agencies and monitor pupils about whom concerns have been raised. Leaders record minor concerns centrally so that patterns can be identified and followed up.
- Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, such as online, near railways and when crossing roads. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said there is someone in school they would talk to if they were worried. Pupils explained to inspectors that bullying is rare and that, when it does happen, they are confident leaders will deal with it well. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Records of recruitment checks contained some administrative errors at the start of the inspection. Leaders had already planned an imminent review of recruitment checks and rectified the errors found in them during the course of the inspection. Leaders have secured an open and safe culture of safeguarding. However, the record-keeping system which underpins it needs to be strengthened to ensure that all the information about pupils is fully centralised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations are not as high as they should be. Pupils' work is often poorly presented. Work in lessons is not consistently challenging enough. Because teachers do

not set their sights high for pupils, pupils often work at a lower level than that of which they are capable. Inspectors noted the negative impact of this in pupils' work rate in some lessons and in a low standard of work in some pupils' books. In Year 5 writing, for example, the quality of presentation in some pupils' books has become worse over the academic year.

- Some teachers do not use time to good effect. When this is the case, pupils are left to wait when they have finished their work, or when they do not know what to do. Because work does not routinely provide enough challenge, some pupils lose interest and become distracted. This slows their progress.
- Teachers in key stages 2 and 3 do not consistently help pupils to develop the skills of effective mathematicians. While pupils' work does get progressively more difficult, in some classes their understanding is not developed well in mathematical reasoning. Pupils are often not required to show their working in mathematics. This makes it hard to revisit and understand previous work. Teaching in key stages 2 and 3 does not meet the curriculum needs of mathematics well.
- Across the school, teachers do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions effectively. Particularly in Years 5 to 8, basic errors in pupils' writing are not identified by teachers and so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. This hinders the progress which pupils make and means that they do not learn to write as well as they should.
- Some teachers plan work which enthuses pupils. They make effective use of questions to develop pupils' understanding and they involve pupils in high-level discussions which make them think. These teachers use a range of teaching techniques to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils respond well to this, working diligently, sharing their ideas with the class and listening to other pupils' ideas and the teacher's guidance.
- Teaching in key stage 1 is typically better than elsewhere in the school. While there is still scope to further develop pupils' reading comprehension and some of their writing skills, much teaching supports pupils' progress well. Pupils use a range of different techniques to solve problems in mathematics, for example, and learn to use mathematical reasoning well. Teachers build well on the strong phonics teaching in the early years. As a consequence, pupils' decoding skills are strong and their outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are improving.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of difference. The school community is generally harmonious with little bullying. There are very few instances of racist behaviour, for example, and pupils report that it is fine to be different. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of accepting each other.
- Leaders make sure pupils have the opportunity to broaden their social and cultural horizons. They organise trips to the theatre and ballet, and visits to other parts of the country. Pupils benefit from a festivals week where they learn about different ways of

living. Leaders provide a range of clubs, such as in art and drama. They run an eco-club and activities to promote pupils' financial awareness.

- Pupils' physical well-being is effectively enhanced by leaders. They promote healthy lifestyles through the healthy eating week and by using the physical education and sport premium funding to encourage pupils to participate in physical activity. They teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning. Too often, pupils do not have high standards of presentation or take pride in their work. When the work is not hard enough for pupils, or when work does not interest them, some pupils are too willing to stop working and talk to other pupils.
- Attendance rates are consistently low. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of attendance and their efforts to improve attendance are not working. The level of attendance remains in the lowest 10% of schools nationally.
- While there is some boisterous behaviour, pupils around the school are generally polite and welcoming. They regularly hold doors open for others and normally move around the site in a sensible manner. Pupils are typically respectful of adults and other pupils.
- In lessons which interest pupils, they behave well. They complete the work they are set and listen and respond well to others. Where teaching is most effective, pupils behave in a way which supports their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress pupils make in writing in key stages 2 and 3 is too slow. Basic misconceptions are not regularly corrected and they persist. As a consequence, pupils do not typically develop good writing skills by the time they leave Year 8.
- The progress pupils make in mathematics in key stages 2 and 3 is more secure than their progress in writing. However, too many pupils do not develop good reasoning skills or acquire the habits of good mathematicians. What they learn is not good enough to meet the requirements of the national curriculum.
- Pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up from lower starting points make more progress than their peers in writing, but less in mathematics and reading. They are not, therefore, typically catching up.
- Pupils develop good phonic understanding and have reading skills which are stronger than their writing skills. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to develop pupils' comprehension of texts.
- In key stage 1, pupils make better progress than in key stage 2. Their progress in mathematics is a particular strength. Pupils understand a variety of mathematical techniques and learn to apply their understanding to solving problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress broadly in line with other pupils in the school. This is not as much progress as that of other pupils nationally, particularly in writing.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported to make good progress in the 'Hive' specialist provision. However, through the rest of the school, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities also closely reflects that of other pupils in the school and so is not good.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of how to make the most of children's time in school. While leaders have taken effective steps to improve early years provision since it opened in 2015, notably in phonics and numeracy, they have not yet ensured that children develop well across the breadth of the curriculum. Progress towards the different early learning goals is too variable.
- Teachers do not structure children's activities carefully enough to make sure children develop and learn. For example, inspectors witnessed children being told by the teacher to go outside to do some writing. When the children went outside, most engaged in unstructured play. As a consequence, children were happy but not making progress. The work inspectors looked at showed that children's progress across different areas of learning is not well balanced.
- In some areas, children make good progress. In numeracy, for example, children's understanding is well developed through an environment rich in number and through plentiful opportunities to practise and develop their mathematical skills. Children are well taught in phonics. In both of these areas, they are well prepared to continue into Year 1.
- Children are happy and safe in the early years. The statutory welfare requirements are met. Children play well together and mix well with their peers in social times. Children listen politely to others and are confident around adults.

School details

Unique reference number	109666
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10046138

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Gunther
Headteacher	Karen Watts
Telephone number	01234 267353
Website	http://westfieldschool.net/
Email address	office@westfieldschool.net
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2015

Information about this school

- Westfield School is a middle deemed primary school serving the Queen’s Park area of Bedford.
- The school is going through a period of significant change as it moves from being a middle school to being a primary school. Since 2015, the school has offered early years education. It currently has pupils in Reception and Years 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- The school provides specialist education for pupils who have particular social, emotional and mental health needs in the Hive.
- The school has a smaller proportion of girls than the national average.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals during the past six years.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

- There is a greater proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities than the national average.
- The school meets the current government's current floor standards for the minimum standards and progress pupils should achieve at key stage 2 in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 32 lessons, sometimes accompanied by the leaders, and reviewed the work of pupils in their books. They visited registration and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with senior and other leaders, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding files. They considered leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans and their analysis of the use of funding. Inspectors reviewed documents demonstrating the work of governors and the school's information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers before school and considered the four responses to the free-text option from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 23 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke with pupils in formal settings and during pupils' free time. Inspectors also spoke with a range of staff with different roles.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Veale	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Dooley	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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