

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTCLIFF INFANT SCHOOL

Bispham, Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119256

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra O'Donnell

Reporting inspector: Barrie Cooper
10182

Dates of inspection: 13th – 14th March 2000

Inspection number: 188192

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crawford Avenue Bispham Blackpool Lancashire FY2 9BY
Telephone number:	01253 353792
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Judith Willis
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd – 25 th April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westcliff Infant School has 194 pupils aged between 4 and 7. They are taught in 7 single age classes. Pupils' attainment on entry represents the full ability range with most being around average. The school is located in Bispham in North Blackpool. Most pupils come from the immediate area which is mainly privately owned housing. 11.3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 pupils below the age of five. Almost all pupils are of white ethnicity, and there are no pupils for whom English is a second language. The school has a high proportion of boys – 61 per cent. There are 16 pupils on the special needs register of whom one has a statement of special educational need. This is below the national average. Pupil: teacher ratio is below the national average at 20.52:1. In January 2000, the school appointed an extra 0.5 teacher and increased non-teaching assistant support as a result of extra income from the standards fund.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Westcliff Infant School is a good school. The pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science that are above national averages. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff in the school are effective and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve good standards by the time they are five in most of the key areas of learning. Their performance in English, mathematics and science is above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Relationships in the school are very good.
- Teaching throughout the school is good with some very good features.
- The provision for the social and moral development of the pupils is very effective.
- The headteacher and senior staff display good leadership and management skills which are successful in maintaining good standards. The day to day administration and financial management of the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in religious education.
- The leadership role of the Governing Body.
- The curriculum provision for the under-fives.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been maintained. Standards in design and technology are now good and the subject is being well taught in the school. Art also has a higher profile in the school but some of the work on display lacks creativity and has been over-directed by the teachers. Resources for both subjects have been improved. The quality of teaching has improved but whilst there is a range of teaching methods used,

pupils under five still have limited opportunities to select and use their own materials or to evaluate their ideas and work. The school has spent a substantial part of its reserves on improving facilities and increasing staff. The outdoor play facilities for the reception classes are now very good and pupils have their own specially constructed playground and a good range of large toys. The school should continue to make good improvement in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A	B	B	B	well above average A above average B
Writing	A	B	B	B	average C below average D
Mathematics	B	C	B	B	well below average E

The school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics compared to both national averages and similar schools. The number reaching level 3 in the standard assessment tests was also above the national averages. There has been some fluctuation in standards over the past three years with a dip in standards in 1998. However over the three years, performance in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently above national averages.

Pupils in the reception classes reach standards above those expected in language and literacy and mathematics by the time they are five. Many are independent readers. The pupils are very confident speakers and listen well. Most are confident with number and many can work with numbers up to ten and beyond. Their personal and social education is very well developed. The creative aspect of their work is not so good however. Pupils have limited opportunity to take part in imaginative play. Their work in art and music provides them with too few opportunities to make choices, or to experiment and evaluate their work. The pupils are able to use computers to access a range of programs linked to their work in literacy and numeracy.

In Key Stage 1, the pupils show increasing confidence in their reading. They are very articulate and very good at listening to one another and their teachers. They develop good formal writing skills and write neatly in joined up handwriting. They use punctuation well and much of their spelling is accurate. They write good stories and poems but these sometimes lack imagination. Their mathematics is of a high standard. They are confident at adding and subtracting numbers and many know their 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables. They recognise shapes, use money and tell the time. In science, they have a good knowledge of the subject but are still developing their skills in designing their own investigations and experiments. An increasing use is made of information technology across the curriculum. Pupils are able to word process and design. In religious education the pupils have inadequate knowledge of the subject. Whilst they have a little understanding of Christianity, their knowledge of other religions is limited.

The majority of pupils are attaining the highest standards of which they are capable. However the school is aware that there is a group of pupils with average ability who need to be further challenged.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils really like coming to school and are very keen to learn. In every class, they settle to work quickly and try to do their best. They have a real thirst for knowledge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the school is excellent. The pupils are thoughtful, considerate and very well mannered.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils welcome the opportunity to take responsibility within the classroom. They tidy up sensibly at the end of lessons. They have very good relationships with one another and the adults they meet in school.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
19 lessons seen overall	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The teaching is good overall with some very good elements. In the inspection, 5 per cent of teaching was excellent, 21 per cent very good, 69 per cent good and 5 per cent satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. Reception class teachers have high expectations of the pupils and anticipate they will become independent readers by the end of the reception year. However in the reception classes, introductory sessions in numeracy and literacy often are overlong and the pupils are expected to sit for too long. The teaching of other subjects is usually good, but teachers do not offer the pupils enough chance to experiment, choose and evaluate their own work. Creative activities receive too much direction from the teacher.

In Key Stage 1, teachers use the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully. There are occasional examples of very good and excellent teaching. In the very best lessons, the teaching is lively and exciting and a good pace is sustained. There is an appropriate emphasis on phonics, which is helping both reading and writing. In numeracy, the teaching is also good. Lesson activities are well planned and the pupils become good at working with numbers up to ten and above.

Lessons are usually planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities in the same class. Good use is made of support teachers and classroom assistants. Extra help is being given to the average pupils in the school who have been identified as under achieving.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the under-fives is too narrow and does not provide enough opportunities for them to develop their imaginations. The Key Stage 1 curriculum is satisfactory but too little time is allocated to religious education. The teaching time each week is 35 minutes below the recommended minimum for Key Stage 1 pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are well supported by their teachers and classroom assistants. Their individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The quality of provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. There are few planned opportunities for spiritual development, and the pupils have limited experience of other faiths and cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. Child protection procedures are in place.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision for the school. Subject co-ordination is good and co-ordinators know how their subjects are taught through the school. There has been some successful monitoring of both literacy and numeracy lessons. The day to day administration of the school is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body is supportive of the school. Governors have begun to develop their role but are not yet sufficiently involved in helping to plan for future developments. They are reluctant to question decisions made by the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and staff make good use of assessment data to evaluate pupils' performance and successfully identify any weaknesses. For example it has identified that pupils find it difficult to plan their own investigations in science.
The strategic use of resources	The financial administration of the school is very good. Very good use has been made of the school's budget to maintain standards and increase staffing. The school has been very successful in obtaining sponsorship from local companies for initiatives such as the reception playground. The headteacher and school secretary are very careful when making budgetary decisions or when purchasing resources to make sure that they obtain the best value for money. Good use has been made of

	money from the standards' fund to offer more support in classes. The school gives good value for money.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children are making good progress • Behaviour in the school is good • The teaching is good • The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting enough range of activities outside lessons • Some parents are concerned about playground supervision prior to the school opening in the morning • Some parents find the locking of the school entrance gates between 2.45pm and 3.00pm inconvenient

The inspection findings support the positive views of parents. The school does provide few activities outside lessons but this is not unusual for an infant school. Morning playground supervision is adequate. The locking of the school gate is inconvenient, but the school has specific reasons for taking this decision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve good standards by the time they are five in most of the key areas of learning. Their performance in English, mathematics and science is above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1.

1. By the time they are five, pupils in the reception class achieve beyond the desirable learning outcomes in all areas of learning apart from creative development where they achieve the desirable learning outcomes. The pupils are confident and have good relationships with one another and with adults. They listen well in class and take turns to answer questions. They play sensibly in the reception playground. They work well individually, for example when reading and in groups following up their literacy and numeracy lessons. They can tidy up their classrooms before playtime and lunch. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. They express excitement about the wonders of the world as in their lesson about plants.
2. Most pupils know their letter sounds and most are reading independently by the end of their reception year. They are very good at listening to one another and their teachers. Most are articulate and speak confidently. They form letters accurately, can write their own names and produce some simple stories. They use numbers to 10 and often beyond, have a good knowledge of mathematical language and can add and subtract.
3. They use computers confidently to help their learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They are able to discuss the four seasons and how each affects their lives through the different climate conditions. They recognise that plants grow from seeds and many can name parts of plants. They use scissors to cut out shapes and pictures and can make collages of these. They demonstrate good co-ordination on the large apparatus outside and use their tricycles carefully on the play road in their playground. The pupils contribute well to class pictures. Their clay tiles with pasta decoration are most effective. They sing in tune and can pick up a rhythm.
4. By the age of seven, most pupils' attainment is above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In English, most read confidently using their phonic knowledge to identify unknown words. They read both books from the reading schemes and school library with good expression, and talk about characters in the stories as well as the plot. They speak confidently in well thought out sentences on a range of subjects. They listen well in class discussions and most can follow instructions. In writing, they form their letters well and join up their handwriting neatly. The standard of spelling is good and they benefit from their weekly spelling test. They know basic punctuation such as full stops and commas, and some use speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks. They write their news and stories and class poems.
5. In mathematics, most write their numbers correctly and can confidently handle numbers up to 100 with many able to go beyond this. They understand the terms odd and even. Most know their 2,3, 5 and 10 tables and demonstrate this knowledge in lively question and answer sessions. They can recognise two and three-dimensional shapes, tell the time and measure using standard units. In science, they demonstrate a good knowledge of plants and can name the different parts on diagrams. They accurately label the internal organs of the human being and identify which foods are

best for you. They successfully forecast which objects will float and sink and test their predictions in a practical activity. They understand how to make a test fair.

The pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Relationships in the school are very good.

6. Throughout the school, the pupils demonstrate keenness to learn new information and to do their very best work. They respond to the purposeful atmosphere in the school and demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. They listen well when the teachers are imparting information and are beginning to undertake their own research through the use of non-fiction books and the Internet. The pupils' behaviour is excellent at all times of the school day. They move around the school in a very orderly manner and are always very polite and well mannered. They show great respect for other people in the school and take great care of the building and its resources. All staff have very good relationships with one another. This is reflected by the pupils in their relationships both with one another and adults in the school. All of this contributes to a positive atmosphere where the emphasis is placed on pupils achieving good standards and making good progress.

Teaching throughout the school is good with some very good features

7. Teachers prepare their lessons well with clear learning objectives. They make good use of the literacy and numeracy strategies and are good at teaching the basic skills in English and mathematics. They place great importance on the pupils' success in these as it enables them to make good progress. They use support staff well to help to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities within the class. Resources are always accessible and available for the pupils. Classes are well managed and organised. The pace of lessons is good. Homework is well used both to revise and extend work learnt in school.
8. In the very best lessons such as one on numeracy in Year 2, expectations are very high and the pupils are challenged throughout the lesson. The pupils are asked very searching questions and expected to answer quickly and accurately. Variety is brought into the teaching of multiplication by using quiet voices and angry voices to recite tables. In one literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils take on different roles to demonstrate how speech marks in their big book indicate direct speech. Pupils are very successfully introduced to keywords such as dialogue, fiction and non-fiction. In an information technology lesson in reception, the choice of program is very appropriate as it reinforces sequencing skills and gives pupils an opportunity to click and drag. The information technology skills are very clearly taught, as is shown by the pupils' understanding of this technique.

The provision for the moral and social development of the pupils is very effective.

9. The school places a great emphasis on the moral and social development of all the pupils. The pupils are made very aware of what is right and wrong and good behaviour, whilst expected, is regularly praised. The pupils are given the opportunity to contribute towards their own class rules, and they are encouraged to discuss these. The pupils' social development is fostered through playground activities and opportunities to work in groups and pairs within lessons. The school regularly holds assemblies where a wide range of achievements is acknowledged and praised. Pupils work hard to improve standards, as they know this will be rewarded. Adults working in the school provide the pupils with very good role models. The school has a warm, friendly and positive ethos.

The headteacher and key staff display good leadership skills, which are successful in helping pupils achieve and maintain good standards. The day-to-day administration and financial management of the school are very good

10. The school is well led. The headteacher, deputy head and staff have a clear commitment to making sure that pupils maintain good standards of work within a well-structured working atmosphere. Year group leaders support other staff well when planning the curriculum for their year group. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced in the school, and work in the classroom has been monitored and evaluated to ensure that standards are high enough. Teachers have been made aware of both strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching in these sessions.
11. The school development plan has very clear targets, building on improvements brought about by the action plan following the last school inspection. The school has introduced a good range of procedures to identify any areas of weakness in the pupils' performance. This includes analysis of baseline assessment and National Curriculum results as well as 'tracking' pupils to identify the areas of work they are covering and whether this is done in sufficient detail.
12. The school is well organised and run. Communication between management and staff is very good. The standard of clerical work is high. The standard of budget management is high and the school makes very good use of expertise within the local education authority. Recent spending decisions have focussed on the provision of extra support teaching time and classroom assistants, in order to further raise standards throughout the school. The school is always very conscious of finding the very best value for money when spending its budget and is successful in gaining sponsorship from local companies and the support of the parents' association.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in religious education

13. The standards in religious education at the age of 7 are below what is expected in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. Too little time is given to the teaching of the subject throughout the school. The school has attempted to include some aspects of the subject within the collective worship. However this is not fully effective and does not enable religious education to be covered in sufficient detail. The pupils write very little about religious education which means that much of the oral work carried out is not reinforced.
14. The pupils display some knowledge of the life of Christ and are aware of the Bible. They have limited understanding of what happens in a church. They are not very aware of other religions and know little of their festivals and beliefs. The pupils do not write enough in their religious education lessons.

The leadership role of the governing body

15. The Governing Body is supportive of the school. However whilst its role has developed recently and governors have been involved in the appointment of a new

head teacher, they are still not all sufficiently aware of what is happening in school. The work of the headteacher is not thoroughly appraised and too few questions are asked about what is going on in the school. Although the finances are monitored, there is little input by the Governing Body to help decide priorities for present and future development and governors play little part in writing the school development plan. They have not yet begun to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of expenditure. Individual governors have been assigned to curriculum roles with responsibility for literacy and numeracy. These governors have participated successfully in training and spent time in helpful classroom observation in school. There has been little other curriculum involvement from governors apart from special educational needs where there are close links with the school. They do not yet act as a 'critical friend' to the school.

The curriculum provision for the under fives

16. Whilst there are elements within the present reception class curriculum that are very good and are effective in producing good standards particularly in literacy and numeracy, the curriculum is too narrow and formal. The planning for the reception classes is more appropriate for older pupils, as it does not offer the pupils sufficient opportunities to experiment in practical activities and to evaluate their work. The pupils are not very confident when selecting activities, initiating their own ideas and participating in art work and music lessons, as the teachers often over-direct these activities. Pupils spend limited time using construction toys, in sand and water play and in role-play.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

10. In order to further improve the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1) Raise standards in religious education by:

- Increasing the time spent on the subject so that pupils can cover the locally agreed syllabus in more detail.
- Making sure that pupils record more of their work in religious education
(paras 13-14)

2) Further develop the role of the governing body so that:

- They are better informed about what is happening in school and they play a greater part in decisions relating to future developments in the school
- They can help to analyse and evaluate the impact of spending decisions
- They learn to act as 'critical friend' to the school.
(para 15)

3) Broaden the planned curriculum for the under-fives in order that:

- Pupils can participate in more activities that are not teacher directed.
- They are given more opportunities to participate in practical and creative activities which they have chosen

(para 16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	21	69	5	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		194
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	39	29	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	34	34
	Girls	26	27	27
	Total	60	61	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	90	90
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	33	37
	Girls	26	27	29
	Total	60	60	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	88	97
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.52
Average class size	27.85

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	169

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
	£
Total income	307284
Total expenditure	317918
Expenditure per pupil	1606
Balance brought forward from previous year	79823
Balance carried forward to next year	69189

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	194
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	32	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	53	4	2	0
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	30	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	30	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	26	2	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	26	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	34	15	8	18

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned about playground supervision before school. Parents also felt that the locking of the school entrance between 2.45pm and 3.00pm caused inconvenience.