



Westfield Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109666
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278238
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Chester Road
School category	Community		MK40 4HW
Age range of pupils	9 to 14		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234267353
Number on roll	276	Fax number	01234347907
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr.Gordon Colling
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Margaret Morgan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Westfield Middle School serves the Queen's Park area of Bedford. The area is economically deprived, and half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school shares a campus with a catholic lower and middle school and an upper school. The majority of pupils (93%) are from minority ethnic backgrounds, 89% speak English as an additional language and over 10% are at an early stage of acquisition. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is nearly twice the national average and a small minority of pupils have statements of special educational need. The school is part of the Bedford Excellence Cluster and is about to become a Full Service Extended school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Westfield Middle School provides a satisfactory standard of education with aspects of good practice. The school has an accurate understanding of its effectiveness. The headteacher has created a harmonious ethos where different cultures are celebrated and respected. The school works closely with parents, and most feel it is doing a good job. Links with the community and local religious centres are outstanding. Pupils' personal development is good, and relationships between pupils and with adults are generally very good. Pupils enjoy their learning and appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities organised for them. Pupils take responsibility for jobs around the school and play an active part in community events, such as arts and music festivals and youth parliament. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused on raising standards and the monitoring of teaching, although accurate, is not rigorous enough. Teaching is satisfactory and results in pupils making sound progress across the school, although standards are below national average. The work set does not always match the ability of the pupils well enough and their progress is not assessed and tracked consistently. While the curriculum is satisfactory the time pupils spend in lessons is below the recommended amount. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has a sound capacity to make further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by matching work more closely to the ability of pupils and meeting the recommended teaching time for the school day. - Improve the quality of leadership and management by monitoring the work of the school more rigorously and by setting measurable targets for school improvement. - Develop consistent assessment and tracking procedures for each subject, and improve the quality of individual education plans.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is broadly satisfactory across the school in English, mathematics and science. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been variable over the past three years. In 2003 they were similar to the national average and the pupils had made good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. In 2004 the results were well below the national average and progress had been slower than average. Results recovered somewhat in 2005, although they were still below average, and the pupils had made average progress. This picture is somewhat distorted because the pupils only spend Years 5 and 6 in the school. The increasing amount of assessment information gathered by the school demonstrates that, from a lower than average starting point, pupils make satisfactory progress, although standards are still lower than expected at the end of Years 6 and 8. The best information available demonstrates that progress is improving in science and that there is some good achievement in physical education. Those whose

first language is not English make good progress in acquiring fluency in spoken English, although their reading and writing skills do not improve as rapidly. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They have a positive attitude to school and to learning, and are very proud of their school. Their behaviour is good and at times, particularly in assembly, excellent. This is because the staff work hard to make sure that all pupils are included in activities, treated in a caring way and given an important role in the life of the school. Levels of attendance are above average. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong. Cultural development is promoted successfully through celebrating the different cultures and customs of pupils attending the school. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong. They have a strong commitment to racial equality and are particularly proud of how the different faith groups are valued by each other. 'This is a multi-racial community', one boy proudly announced, 'and we respect each other.' They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and take an active part in the good opportunities provided for active play at break and lunchtimes. In addition, as part of gaining the Healthy Schools award, the school has negotiated a dedicated catering service and offers a good range of healthy lunches. Pupils participate well in a range of community activities, including fund-raising events. The pupils themselves decide which charity is to be supported and how, contributing effectively to pupils' social and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and participate well in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use interesting methods to help pupils learn, such as the use of talking partners in Year 5. Teachers enable pupils to contribute to the assessment of their own learning. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, pupils understood the National Curriculum levels, were able to use these to assess their own work and explain what they had to do to get better. Effective use is made of the pupils' organiser to record homework and targets. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in helping pupils to learn. Where teaching was less effective, learning objectives were not always clear or shared with the pupils, and the final session of lessons do not consolidate the learning that has taken place. The work set is not always matched closely to the ability of the pupils, and the progress they make is not assessed or tracked carefully enough to ensure they make consistently good progress. The quality of marking is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is very good provision, across the school, for citizenship, personal, social and health education and careers education. These areas are very well co-ordinated. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to experience active citizenship. The school makes a great effort to enrich the experiences of their pupils by organising a range of activities, including trips to France, field work and visitors into school. There is also a wide range of extra curriculum activities and clubs, such as sports, arts, computers and booster sessions. There is high take-up for these activities. Pupils enjoy them and they provide valuable learning experiences. However, the school day falls significantly short of the recommended time for lessons. This particularly affects the time allocated for the teaching of English. The school does not meet its statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides exemplary care for the pupils' physical, social and emotional well-being. All health and safety regulations are met well and there are good arrangements for child protection, all staff having had recent training. Pupils feel secure at school and recognise the many strategies that are in place to keep them safe. The school nurse provides a valuable service through the drop-in advice service, sex education programme and confidential support for pupils. The school day is arranged well, specifically to cater for those pupils who come to school without having eaten breakfast. There is little bullying or racism, and where there are any occurrences, the pupils are confident that they will be dealt with rapidly and effectively. There are good systems to identify pupils who need particular care and support. However, the school is at an early stage in developing and using detailed systems for tracking the pupils' progress and setting them targets. Therefore, teachers do not have enough information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Individual learning plans for those who have learning difficulties are not sufficiently specific, so that teachers do not have enough guidance about how they should be supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher promotes a caring and inclusive ethos in which pupils feel safe, and are able to concentrate on their learning. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in a number of areas. The senior management team know how to bring about improvement and the deputy headteacher is developing the effective use of data to track the performance of individual pupils. Although some middle managers have the specialist expertise to tackle their management tasks, this is not always the case. The staff are well motivated and want to do their best by the school and its

pupils. The governors are very supportive and work hard on the school's behalf but are over-reliant on the views of the headteacher and do not hold the school sufficiently to account. The school's self evaluation has correctly identified its strengths and weaknesses but the school improvement plan is not sufficiently detailed or sharply focused enough on driving up standards. Objectives are not specific and this means senior staff and governors cannot measure how well they are meeting their targets. The school forges strong partnerships with a range of organisations. It welcomes the views of all members of the school community and is successfully involved in local initiatives, which have brought extra resources and training into the school. The school has collaborated well with local schools to provide extended services for the local community. Evaluation of teaching is mainly accurate, but the monitoring which takes place is not systematic or rigorous enough to raise the overall quality. The school has faced recruitment difficulties but has been innovative in finding new staff. Whilst the school has been affected by falling numbers, it has coped with this situation well. The accommodation is very well-maintained and provides a stimulating and welcoming learning environment.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and watching you at work and at play. We were very impressed with your politeness and how open and friendly you were when you talked to us. You told us a great deal about your school that helped us to get to know it well in a short time. We found out that you really enjoy coming to school. You think that it is a kind school, where all sorts of different people work together in a community. You trust your teachers and other adults to help you if you are having problems. The school cares for you and encourages you to be healthy and to be safe. You know the rules and understand the reasons for them. You behave well and take lots of responsibility around the school, including being on the school council. You take part in a wide range of enjoyable activities during and after the school day. We think that you could achieve even better in your lessons and we have asked your teachers to make sure the work they give you is at the right level and keep a closer watch on your progress to make sure that this happens. Your teachers will be expecting a lot from you in the months and years ahead. You enjoy learning and because your teachers want the best for you we are confident that you will all improve even further in the future. We wish you every success.