

Westwood Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105905
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	287361
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Matthews
Headteacher	Ms Sandra Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001
School address	Vaughan Street Winton Eccles Manchester Lancashire M30 8DH
Telephone number	0161 7892598
Fax number	0161 7889763

Age group	3–11
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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

Westwood Park is a larger than average community school. It is located in an area of economic and social disadvantage with 50% of pupils eligible for a free school meal which is well above the national average. The number of pupils has increased by approximately 25% since the last inspection. This is due to the closure of a local primary school. The period since 2004 has been unsettled for the school. From January 2006 the school joined together on one site and stability of leadership was established with the appointment of the current headteacher. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are two pupils at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is slightly below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Westwood Park provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has gone through an unsettled period but the appointment of the headteacher and the move onto one site have brought recent stability. The school is a friendly and welcoming place with clearly established routines. Pupils are polite and generally well behaved. Most parents are supportive of the school as shown in their overwhelming attendance, by mums and dads, at the Foundation Stage phonic fun day.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and, by Year 6, standards are broadly average. From a low starting point pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) because the curriculum fully meets their needs and interests, and they benefit from working with highly effective teaching assistants. The purpose built unit is bright and stimulating and pupils make good use of the well planned outdoor area. Due to a legacy of ineffective teaching, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been well below average. The picture has improved this year because the headteacher's decisive action has strengthened the quality of teaching. Infant pupils are moving on in their learning and standards are starting to rise. Pupils are also now making satisfactory progress in the juniors, between Years 3 and 6. However, few do really well for their age and many boys underachieve. While the curriculum is satisfactory overall, the activities do not always appeal to the boys or challenge enough the higher ability pupils. The school's recent steps to tackle this problem are meeting with some success.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and want to behave well. Behaviour is satisfactory. However, a small minority of parents expressed concern over some displays of challenging behaviour. The school is aware of these issues and is working with the Behaviour and Education Support Team to resolve them. Pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues is developing through a well planned curriculum for those aspects. Good experiences in school help pupils to know a lot about being healthy. They feel safe and know who to go to if they are troubled. Attendance and punctuality are concerns for the school. Despite the school implementing strategies to improve attendance it remains well below the national average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the direction of the school. She has created a strong senior leadership team who are focusing rigorously on improving pupils' progress. This has already had a beneficial effect on standards and progress. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress show that pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are on course to do better in the national tests than pupils in recent years. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done and some actions have yet to be seen through to a successful conclusion to raise achievement throughout the school. Governance is satisfactory and good use is starting to be made of individual governor expertise. Governors are beginning to be proactive in their role, offering support and holding the headteacher and senior leadership team accountable for achievement and standards. The progress already shown in raising pupils' achievement, together with leaders' clear view of what the school does well and what needs to be done gives the school a satisfactory capacity to tackle further aspects of its work. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in learning to enable all pupils, especially boys and higher achieving pupils, to do as well as they can.
- Raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good standard.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are below the nationally expected levels in all areas, especially communication, language and literacy. Over their time in the Foundation Stage children make good progress with most reaching the expected levels for their age in most areas of learning. However, their weak listening and speaking skills slow their progress in early reading and writing.

This good start has not, until recently, been sustained in Key Stage 1; the school's 2006 test results at the end of Year 2 were below average in writing and well below in reading and mathematics. The school's data indicates current standards are higher in these subjects. At the end of Year 6, despite improvements in the school's results in tests in English, mathematics and science in 2006, standards attained remained below the national averages in English and mathematics, but average in science. Nevertheless, the majority of all pupils had made rapid progress in Year 6, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These results showed that over their time in Key Stage 2 pupils had made satisfactory progress overall with girls performing better than boys. Higher ability pupils do not always attain the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of pupils, including their understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in their lives, is satisfactory. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Behaviour in class, around the school and on the playground is satisfactory and often good when pupils are involved in activities which interest them. For example, at lunch time many pupils used the sport equipment sensibly to play individually or together as teams. However, the behaviour of a small group of older pupils, mainly boys, is at times unacceptable and disrupts the learning and play of others.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and stated that they enjoy coming to school: 'It's better than watching the television and you get a better job'. However, this is not reflected in regular attendance by all pupils. Pupils value the extra playtime when their attendance for the week hits 88%. Despite a slight improvement earlier this year attendance remains low. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They talk readily about healthy options at lunch time and they enjoy the sports in the community scheme, developing a keenness for physical activity and important life skills. The role of the school council is developing. Council members are aware of the importance of their role and their potential influence on school improvement. It was the members' idea to make anti-smoking posters to reinforce the dangers of smoking.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with pockets of good practice. Typical features of good teaching include work matched to the needs and interests of all pupils, teachers' good subject knowledge and lively, interactive activities. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are engaged throughout the lesson and make good progress. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils were given the opportunity to plan an investigation using a 'post it' system.

Where teaching is less effective there is too much teacher led activity and little challenge, resulting in some pupils especially boys and higher achieving pupils being less engaged and not making the progress they should. Teachers now have started to check pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and underperforming pupils are given additional support. Teaching assistants work with individual and small groups of pupils to support their learning and ensure access to the curriculum. Most of the older pupils know their targets for English and mathematics and some were able to explain what they needed to do to improve further. A good example of this was in the pupils' 'big write' books in which teachers had highlighted the strengths of the work and advised pupils on how it can be improved. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and accurately but pupils are not always given clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Activities in the Foundation Stage are planned to offer many opportunities for speaking and listening. For example, prior to the pupils starting their 'big write' they sat in groups eating snacks and talking to each other. This led to pupils having lots of ideas when they started their writing. Highly effective teaching assistants support the teachers in encouraging these social skills and developing pupils' vocabulary. The school gives most time to fostering pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) but the opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in all areas of the curriculum are limited. On occasions, in Key Stage 1, meaningful links are made between literacy, science and design technology. For example, Year 2 used the story of The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch to design and make working models of lighthouses. However, this linkage of subject areas is underdeveloped and is a lost opportunity to plan activities to interest and meet the learning needs of all pupils, especially boys and higher achieving pupils. Provision is enhanced through visitors linked to the creative and physical aspects of the curriculum. Good examples are the Samba drum group and an artist, a Premiership football club and a local cricket club. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have had the chance to learn French over the past year. The school recognises it has some way to go in further enriching the curriculum for the pupils and is now focusing on opportunities for visits which link with an area of study.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Required policies and procedures are in place to help ensure that pupils work and play in a safe and secure environment. The school has recently

reviewed its behaviour policy, involving the whole school community. The Behaviour and Education Support Team is working with the school to resolve the issue of poor behaviour of a small group of older pupils. Pupils are well cared for and the school works effectively with parents and other agencies to closely monitor the progress of all its pupils including those who are most vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Arrangements are good for supporting pupils joining the Nursery. Parents commented on how quickly their children settled in to the school. Transition arrangements to the high school are strong with a detailed plan of events to ensure a smooth move for pupils as they leave Year 6, including a visit to the high school. Arrangements for moving into the next class within the school are less well developed.

The school has introduced a rigorous system for checking pupils' academic progress. As a result staff are more able to set targets for pupils' learning in lessons and for the longer term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. After a very unsettled period the headteacher has vigorously led initiatives to move the school forward. Since her appointment a year ago, the headteacher has quickly and correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has made several key appointments - including a deputy headteacher - to the senior leadership team, strengthening its strategic role. Middle managers are becoming established in their roles.

Staff new to the school have strengthened the quality of teaching and added to the positive commitment to school improvement. The headteacher has sought the support of the local authority to introduce initiatives to raise standards and pupils' achievement, as well as their behaviour. All these steps are starting to bear fruit and the school's capacity to improve, currently satisfactory, is growing.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors show high levels of support to the work of the school. Individual governors are beginning to use their areas of expertise to support areas of improvement, such as raising attendance. Governors are committed to raising the school's profile within the community but it is only recently that they have been robust enough in evaluating its effectiveness and the impact of their decisions.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Westwood Park Community Primary, Manchester, M30 8DH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school. You were very polite, friendly and enthusiastic to talk to us. You told us lots about your school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and other school staff. Westwood is a satisfactory school. Over the last few years you have all experienced a very unsettled time with some of you working on different sites, pupils and teachers leaving and joining the school and changes of headteacher. Now it is much more settled.

These are the things we found best about your school.

- You make a good start to your education in the Nursery and Reception class.
- You have a headteacher who knows how to make the school better for you all.
- Your teachers care for you and look after you.
- You know how to stay healthy and enjoy the sporting activities.
- You are getting better in your tests.
- Your teachers know how to help you to make more progress.
- Your school council has ideas to make the school better.
- Some of you do not come to school regularly and this stops you from learning.

Your teachers will be trying to make sure that:

- you get better at reading, writing and mathematics
- you have interesting work so you can learn quickly and make more progress
- you all attend school regularly and on time.

We have also asked your headteacher to help the teachers to get even better at teaching you. You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best.

We are sure you will help your teachers and continue to build on the improvements that you are making now.