



# Westfield Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111240  
**Local Authority** Halton  
**Inspection number** 288901  
**Inspection dates** 31 January –1 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Clayton Crescent
<b>School category</b>	Community		Runcorn
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Cheshire WA7 4TR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 572343
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	160	<b>Fax number</b>	01928 565099
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian McIntyre
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Sexton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 January –1 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288901
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Westfield is a smaller than average primary school on an estate of mainly local authority housing close to Runcorn docks. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than the national average. The majority of pupils are White British, with most pupils coming from families who live near to the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above the national average. This is largely due to the presence of a hearing impaired unit with places for up to eight pupils. Three classes in Key Stage 2 have pupils from two year groups.

The school has a Healthy School Award, Activemark Award and Football Association Charter Standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Westfield Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has real strengths in a number of areas of its work. The headteacher and all the staff are committed to creating a caring and supportive climate for learning and value each child. Pupils feel happy and safe and visitors can immediately feel the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in school. The school enjoys a good reputation in the area: parents are happy to send their pupils to the school and many attended the school themselves. They regard the headteacher and staff as approachable and supportive and when pupils have a problem, either with work or with play, they know the school will help sort it out. A parent commented, for example, that she did not realise her child needed glasses until the school picked it up. Another parent was contacted by the teacher when a child was having difficulty with reading. Westfield is an inclusive school, with pupils from the hearing impaired unit joining their friends in the main school as often as possible.

Pupils find much fun in being in school. The many and varied extra-curricular activities offer all pupils an opportunity to develop their talents and interests. The comment of one child - 'I love this school' - owes much to this enrichment of the curriculum.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although it is often better than this in individual lessons. Pupils are generally very willing to work, although some lose a little concentration when they find the task either too hard or too easy. Teachers plan using nationally recommended guidelines but work in lessons is not always adapted well to match activities to the learning needs of all pupils, especially the more able. Plans do not always take assessments of pupils' progress into account or set accurate and challenging enough curriculum targets. Consequently, pupils' progress has been uneven, particularly for the most able and in mathematics at Key Stage 2, although achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils enter school with standards below those expected for their age. At the end of the Reception year standards are broadly those expected for pupils of that age. Standards attained by pupils in Year 6, as shown by the most recent test results, are below what is expected for their age in English and mathematics, and average in science.

Leadership and management at all levels, including governance, are satisfactory. The headteacher leads a committed school family and has been successful in seizing opportunities to widen what the school has to offer. It recently received the Activemark Award. There has been some checking on the quality of teaching and learning in the school but monitoring and evaluation have not been rigorous enough to make sure that standards improve as quickly as the school expects. For example, the school improvement plan and action plans give few indications of what needs to be done, who will do it and how it will help to raise standards. This is the prime reason the school is not as good as it thinks it is. Teachers check the pupils' progress each half term and mark work regularly, but comments are not always specific enough to move pupils on in their work.

The school has made headway on some of the key issues since the last inspection, but some points still need to be dealt with. There are now good systems to support teachers in their professional development. Vacancies on the governing body have now been filled and governors are suitably placed to provide more rigour in the evaluation of the standards achieved in the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the most able pupils are provided with work that challenges them.
- Make more effective use of assessment data to inform planning and the setting of targets.
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Strengthen whole-school leadership and management by improving self-evaluation and action planning so that it focuses more clearly on the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The school judges achievement and standards as satisfactory and inspectors agree. Pupils enter Reception with standards that are below expectations for their age but, by the end of the Reception Year, many have knowledge and skills fairly typical for their age, although a significant proportion is slow to come to grips with reading and writing. Writing remains a weakness as the pupils enter Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading are broadly average but standards in mathematics and writing remain below average. By the end of Year 6 they also remain below average in English and mathematics although standards in science are average. Rightly, the school recognises that too few of the able pupils do well for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from the hearing impaired unit, make good progress because of the good levels of support provided.

The school benefits from a strong partnership with the local authority. Literacy and numeracy consultants are working effectively to support teachers, particularly in improving writing at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stage 2, as well as to identify what is needed to raise standards further.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school. They attend regularly and feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good: pupils listen attentively and concentrate in lessons. In Reception, pupils were entranced by the story of the Gingerbread Man as the teacher used puppets to bring the story to life. Similarly, pupils were highly involved in an art lesson on facial expression, when two pupils stayed still whilst the rest of the class made a sketch of their faces. The real enthusiasm, of many pupils, for art was summed up with one comment from a

little girl, 'Art is my favourite thing to do in school.' Relationships in the school are good and this successfully encourages pupils to consider and cooperate with others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Very young pupils learn to understand their feelings. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through themes covered in assemblies. Play leaders enjoy organising games for the younger pupils at lunchtime. During their time at school pupils develop many qualities needed for the future, including working safely and make a good contribution to the community. For example, the school choir sing in Runcorn shopping city. Pupils are asked their opinions by school councillors who take their responsibilities seriously. They were very keen to share with inspectors their experience of working together with the parent teacher association to raise funds to buy small games equipment to be used at play times. To celebrate good attendance and good behaviour the school council introduced the presentation of a trophy each half term.

The school has recently been awarded Healthy School status and pupils know how to keep fit and well nourished: they talk readily about how much they enjoy the healthy choices at lunchtime and appreciate the fact that the older pupils all go swimming.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although it is sometimes good and occasionally outstanding. In the Reception Year, outstanding teaching and very effective use of the teaching assistant help pupils to make good progress in their learning and personal development, from a below average starting point on entry. Satisfactory, and sometimes good, teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 helps pupils build on these firm foundations so that they make satisfactory progress overall. A particular strength of teaching throughout the school is the good quality of the relationships between adults and pupils which results in the pupils' good personal development and their obvious enjoyment of learning. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. Pupils with hearing disabilities benefit from one-to-one support and the many resources available to help their learning.

In the best lessons teachers are very clear about what each child must learn. Pupils are highly motivated and are actively engaged in practical activities. Teaching assistants provide a high level of effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In less effective lessons, assessment information is not always used to provide different tasks to match learning needs. As a result, progress is uneven and higher attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they should. The school has well developed systems to track pupils' progress but in some lessons teachers do not reinforce key learning points or show pupils what they need to do next to produce good work. As a result, pupils' learning is not as good as it might have been.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the Reception class there is a good balance of activities between those taught by the staff and those chosen by pupils themselves. The school has introduced the teaching of French in Year 3 and Year 6 pupils receive lessons in French from a teacher from the local high school. The curriculum is enriched further by the provision of a wide range of well attended extra-curricular activities and visits, for example, the annual trip to Fox Howe allows pupils to experience a range of outward bound activities. The school has many computers which are confidently used by many pupils to extend their understanding in many subjects. The interactive whiteboards in all classes are used regularly by staff. Throughout the school, there are plenty of opportunities for practical activities.

The school makes much use of national literacy and numeracy strategies and published planning aids. However, these are not adapted well enough to match activities to the learning needs of all pupils, especially the more able. The school has recognised this and now organises pupils into single age groups for mathematics and science. The consultants from the local authority are working with staff to give guidance in planning activities which more fully meet the needs of all learners. The benefit of this is beginning to show with better standards being seen.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support so that they can take full part in the life of the school. Those pupils with hearing problems, who are doing well in mathematics, join their peers in the mornings and do well with teaching assistant help.

The experiences of art spill out into the art club. The quality of the pupils' work is seen, for example, in the display on portraits in the style of Picasso. The music room is well resourced.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school has a very caring ethos, with staff working hard to support the pupils' good personal development, the support and guidance provided for academic progress is inconsistent.

Policies and procedures are in place to help ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Child protection procedures are in place. Parents commented positively about the support their children received when they started school. The teacher of the Reception class visits the playgroup and gets to know the pupils before they start school. Pupils visit the Reception class to get to know the staff and become familiar with the classroom. When pupils transfer to high school they are well prepared through a series of visits to the school. Parents feel these arrangements help to ensure their pupils settle quickly in the different settings. While the support and guidance for pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, there is much scope to refine and reinforce the procedure to make sure all pupils are set and achieve more challenging targets.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a very 'hands on' approach to leading and managing the school: he regularly visits lessons and is well respected by parents. He is supported by a keen and enthusiastic deputy headteacher. Together with the governors they provide satisfactory leadership and management overall, but with particular strengths in pastoral leadership. A good example is the emphasis placed on ensuring that pupils in the hearing impaired unit are included in school activities as often as possible. All pupils are valued as individuals, but the school does not give enough attention to raising the academic bar, especially for the more able pupils.

School self-review and assessment procedures are not rigorous enough. As a result, senior staff and governors do not have a completely accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors comply with statutory requirements and offer wholehearted support. However, they are not active enough in planning the school's development and evaluating the effectiveness of its work.

Subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic about making improvements and have produced action plans. However, the leaders are not provided with enough guidance or opportunities to evaluate just how good learning and teaching is in their subjects in order to take the necessary action to secure the desired improvement.

The headteacher, governors and management team have provided satisfactory leadership and management since the last inspection. This has resulted in some positive improvements and shows the school has the satisfactory capacity to improve further.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	2
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**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school when we came to see how well you are learning. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed meeting and talking with you.

These are the things we found best about your school.

- All the adults look after you very well.
- You are polite, friendly and well behaved.
- You have lots of fun.
- You enjoy all the extra activities after school.

Your teachers will be trying to make sure that:

- you all know exactly how to make your own work better
- you all have work that you do not find too easy or too hard.

We have asked Mr Sexton, the governors and all the teachers to work together to help you learn more and also to be sharper in how they decide what should be done, who should do it and whether they do it well enough.

We know you will help them to do this.

We hope you continue to enjoy your learning at Westfield.