

# Westfield First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117254
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290771
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheelagh Barnes

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Anna Armitage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Caroline Price
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Durrants Lane Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 3PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 862729
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 874467

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over two days.

## Description of the school

Westfield First School is smaller than average, with 150 on roll, but has grown in size since the previous inspection. A broadly average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals, and a smaller than the national average proportion speak English as an additional language. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average at around a quarter. However, in some year groups it is much higher at just under a third. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is in line with that expected for children of that age but does fluctuate slightly between years. There have been significant changes in staffing, including headteacher and deputy headteacher in recent times, with four teachers new to the school, three of whom are at early stages in their careers. The current headteacher was appointed in 2006 after a period as acting headteacher. The school has been awarded the Hertfordshire Quality Standard and Healthy School Status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which gives good value for money. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own evaluation of its current overall effectiveness. Leadership and management are good and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. Boys and girls from all groups, including children in the Nursery and Reception classes, achieve well because teaching and learning is good overall. One parent commented that 'the Nursery has been a fantastic introduction to school.' The school has reviewed its assessment, particularly in English, science and mathematics and this is now very accurate and used well to track the progress of individuals and groups. As a result of tracking information, the main academic focus in the last few years has been to raise pupils' achievement in writing. The school has been successful in making a start with this. The progress made by pupils throughout the school is good and standards are above those expected for their ages, although achievement in writing in some classes is still no better than satisfactory. Not all teachers make the best use of opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in English when writing in other subjects. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in reading, speaking and listening, information and communication technology (ICT) and science, and standards are above average. The school has now identified the need to focus on raising standards in mathematics for the oldest pupils. While achievement in mathematics is good and standards are above average for pupils in the youngest classes, older pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to come to school and learn to work together effectively. These factors all have a positive impact on how well pupils are prepared for the next stage in their school career. An extremely varied range of activities, including music and French, enrich the good curriculum effectively. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the point of each lesson and are learning to evaluate whether or not they have met the lesson's aims. In writing, they generally know what they need to master in order to improve but their knowledge of their next target in mathematics is more variable. Pupils are taught very well about the importance of healthy lifestyle and diet. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciative of its work. For example, one parent expressed the view that 'I think this is a very good school. The staff are hardworking and caring.' Others reported that 'we are very happy with the schooling our daughter is receiving.' Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Links with the community are good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching of mathematics is more consistently of the highest standard, particularly for potentially higher attaining pupils; and that pupils are more aware of the next thing they need to concentrate on to improve their work in mathematics.
- Use the challenges set for pupils to improve their writing in English lessons more consistently in other subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils from all groups, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well. Children settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes and make steady gains in their

learning so that standards are slightly above those expected by the end of the Reception year. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 and 2 so that, by the end of their time in Key Stage 1, standards are above average in all core skill areas. Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is good overall; pupils make consistently good gains in their learning in reading, speaking and listening, ICT and science. Progress and achievement in writing have been a focus for the whole school and are at least satisfactory, and often good, in the oldest classes. Standards are generally higher than expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 4, although achievement in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. The school sets suitably challenging targets in all subjects.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school has effective systems to develop pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and to their learning are good. Attendance has improved in recent times and is now above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Social and moral development provision is of a high standard and pupils make consistently good gains in their knowledge and skills in these aspects of learning. The school council plays an important part in pupils' social and development and awareness of issues of citizenship. Recent pupils' suggestions, for example, have led to improvements at playtimes and collections of shoes for charity. Spiritual and cultural development provision is occasionally good, but generally, it is satisfactory. The school has identified this as an area for development in the next year.

A strong emphasis is placed on teaching pupils about healthy lifestyles and they are knowledgeable about making the right choices to keep healthy and stay safe. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is good. They are given many opportunities to make a positive contribution to the community. Their successes are celebrated in assemblies and through certificates and the award of house points, each of which helps to build their self-esteem.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to pupils making good gains in their learning. Boys and girls of all abilities and those with learning difficulties achieve well due to the good teaching they receive. Teachers plan activities well with regard to pupils' ages and abilities in the main, although on occasion, mathematics lessons for the oldest classes lack real challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses are deployed efficiently. Throughout the school, pupils find their learning enjoyable because teachers take care to make the subject matter of lessons interesting and exciting. Assessment is good and the school has effective systems to monitor pupils' progress. They are well informed about what they are expected to learn in each lesson and are encouraged to judge how well they have met these aims. However, not all pupils confidently know what their specific targets for improvement are in mathematics, and, on occasion, teachers miss opportunities to remind pupils to practise their writing targets in other subjects.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage curriculum for Nursery and Reception children is well planned and broad and provides them with a good start to their education. Elsewhere, the curriculum covers all the required areas and gives a good emphasis to different subjects, including French for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. There is a good number of additional events, such as trips to places of interest and visitors who are invited in to the school to broaden the pupils' views of community and national issues. The school is successful in developing pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living through its lessons in personal, social and health education. Displays around the school and the house point system celebrate achievements in many aspects of development. A good range of extracurricular activities develops pupils' language, physical and social skills effectively. Resources, including computers and interactive whiteboards, are used well to teach skills in ICT.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' happiness and safety are promoted very effectively and child protection procedures are fully met. Provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language is good. All pupils are integrated well into all aspects of school life. The systems the school has developed to monitor their academic progress are rigorous. This assessment information is used well to match work to pupils' needs in most subjects. Healthy living is promoted well; as a result pupils learn to make good choices, such as in their diet. Good care is also taken to ensure that pupils know who to turn to if they need help with a problem and this makes them confident and happy. The school has good links with parents. It provides good information for them about the work their children are doing, what their next areas for improvement are and the progress they are making.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher has a very clear view of the school based on rigorous and accurate monitoring. She and the deputy headteacher ensure that this information is used effectively to highlight areas for improvement in the development plan. As a result, there have been significant improvements, especially in attendance, use of ICT and standards in writing. The governing body are strong supporters of the school and feel confident to question and challenge the leadership. All legal requirements are met and financial management is good. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion through its links with the community.

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## Annex A

## 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>	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

11 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Westfield First School, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3PJ

Thank you for welcoming me into your school when I visited recently and for being so polite and friendly when you talked to me. I know you are proud of your school and you told me of all the things you really like about it.

- You get a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You enjoy lessons, because school is a happy place.
- You come to school regularly.
- The teaching you receive is helping you to make good progress in your learning, especially in reading, speaking and listening, science and in ICT.
- Teachers help you to learn how to learn and play together and behaviour is good.
- Your headteacher knows what to do to make your school even better. She has already identified the things we agree the school needs to do to next.

The things I have asked your school to do next are

- For the older pupils to know what they need to learn to do next in mathematics, so that they can do even better.
- For teachers to try to remind you more often to write as well in other subjects as you do in literacy lessons.

I really enjoyed talking to you about your learning and watching you work. I wish you all well for the future and hope that you have a really lovely summer.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Barnes

Lead Inspector