

Weston Hills CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120554
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291778
Inspection date	24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Paul Winn
Headteacher	Mrs Christina Turnell
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2002
School address	Learning Lane Weston Hills Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 6DL
Telephone number	01406 380309
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This village school has changed significantly since its previous inspection in 2002. It moved to a new building in 2005. Although it is still smaller than most primary schools, the number on roll has nearly doubled and the school is now over-subscribed. About half the pupils now come from nearby Spalding and the surrounding area. A higher than average proportion of pupils has joined the school other than at the usual time, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

The prosperity of this rural area is mixed. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, whilst still below the national average, has risen substantially following the school's recent introduction of a cooked midday meal. There are more boys than girls in the school but the numbers and proportions in each year group vary. The majority of children are White British. A small proportion is from other minority ethnic backgrounds and some of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils looked after by the local authority is higher than in most schools.

Around a fifth of the pupils have been identified by the school as having learning difficulties and disabilities, a high proportion of these with emotional and behavioural difficulties. When they start in the Foundation Stage, children's skills and knowledge are generally below those typical of their age.

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. It has a number of outstanding features, especially the quality of the care, guidance and support it provides for pupils. In their latest self-evaluation report, the school's leaders rightly identify its effectiveness as good because there are some areas where the school knows it needs to improve and develop further. The school has faced considerable challenges arising from the move to a new building and, with it, the significant increase in the number and needs of pupils. Its success in meeting these is the result of good leadership and management. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has been the guiding force that has kept the focus firmly on pupils' achievement and progress during a hectic and potentially disruptive period. At the heart of this are robust systems for checking the school's performance and its progress towards its challenging targets. Teaching and support staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's clear vision for the school's development and work very well together. The recent establishment of a senior management team has provided the impetus for developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning. These new responsibilities, previously undertaken by the headteacher, have yet to become embedded.

Teaching and learning across the school are good. Lessons are interesting and pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Staff promptly identify and cater for pupils' different learning needs but occasionally the pace of teaching for the whole class is not challenging enough for the more able. The school's links with outside agencies, other providers and parents are outstanding. Taking into account the high proportion of pupils who have joined the school other than at the usual times, inspection evidence confirms that pupils achieve well. The standards and quality of education in the Foundation Stage are good. Children in Reception make good progress and this momentum is maintained as they move through the school. Overall standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average and slightly higher than average by the end of Year 6. Teachers' analysis of pupils' performance in assessments has correctly highlighted using and applying mathematics to solve problems and boys' writing as areas for improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is good and pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. Behaviour is good. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work independently when required. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of healthy living and participate in regular physical activity. The curriculum is good. The school provides pupils with a good range of activities in lessons, and through lunchtime and after-school clubs, to help them learn. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff know their pupils very well and pupils feel safe in school. The school has comprehensive systems for checking how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science. Staff use this information to set pupils challenging targets matched to their abilities and ages, and to identify where extra help is required. Parents speak highly of the school and are pleased with the way in which it has managed its expansion. In maintaining the excellent quality of care and support for pupils and developing its provision in a new building and grounds since the last inspection, the school's leaders have demonstrated that the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics, through developing problem-solving, and in boys' writing.
- Ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons.

- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although the rise in pupil numbers makes year-to-year comparisons difficult, achievement is good over time. When they start in Reception, children's skills and experiences are often below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into school routines and many are on track to achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. In the 2006 assessments, standards at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys were ahead of girls in reading and mathematics but girls did better in writing. Test results in 2006 at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Over half this year group joined the school after the start of Year 3. The school's statutory targets were exceeded in English but fewer pupils than expected reached the higher level in mathematics. Although girls reached higher standards than boys in these tests, there was no significant difference in their achievement. A higher than average proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 has learning difficulties. Given their results at the end of Year 2, the school's tracking information shows that pupils have made good progress and most will meet their suitably challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and pupils looked after by the local authority make good progress. Those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are good, and they know what is expected of them in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their above average attendance confirms this. They particularly enjoy the new computers and the generous outside space for play and exercise. Pupils explain very enthusiastically how daily exercise and good eating habits help them keep fit and well. They have a good understanding of keeping safe. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties mostly respond positively but occasionally their attitudes and behaviour are challenging. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in line with the school's agreed policies, and pupils of different ages say they appreciate the consistently firm but fair approach taken by the staff. Through the relatively new school council, pupils make a valued contribution to the day-to-day life of the school, including making decisions about the use of their allocated budget. Pupils work well with each other and are successfully developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology that they will need in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's evaluation that teaching and learning are good is accurate. Teachers plan well to meet the wide ranging needs of the different abilities within their mixed age classes, although occasionally more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. At the beginning of each lesson, they ensure that pupils are aware of what they will learn and the work expected of them. This provides pupils, particularly those who lack confidence in new learning situations, with a good

understanding of what they have to do. As a result, lessons proceed with a minimum of fuss and time is well used. At the close of the lesson, pupils discuss the progress they have made and relate this to their learning goals. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning, particularly through the use of the interactive whiteboards. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide pupils who need extra help with a good balance of support and challenge. Teachers' regular marking of pupils' work tells them what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is carefully planned to take account of mixed-age classes. Teachers take good account of national guidelines for the Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy. The move to the new school has improved the opportunities for teachers to develop links between subjects. This is being developed through the use of ICT, provision for which has been significantly improved. Good progress is being made but much is newly in place and is not yet embedded.

The arrangements for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are good, and this is reflected in the good and outstanding elements of their personal development. Pupils enjoy a good range of sporting activities, including tag rugby, football, rounders, netball and country dancing, and take part in the choir and tin whistle bands. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Pupils regularly participate in activities with other schools and in local events. The school's work in developing healthy lifestyles has been recognised by a 'Healthy Schools' award. Pupils have recently taken part in the 'Great Vegetable Challenge' and are now in the process of turning their designs into working gardens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the school's care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pupils feel happy and content in school. They are confident about turning to an adult for help in resolving any problems they may have. The school makes excellent provision for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, drawing on the expertise and experience of the school staff and a range of outside agencies. Pupils who join the school other than at the usual times appreciate the 'buddy' system that helps them to settle quickly. All staff are trained in child protection matters. The school carries out appropriate checks on all adults who work with pupils and makes thorough risk assessments about its activities and visits.

Pupils are well aware of their targets for reading, writing and numeracy. The school's tracking systems are thorough. Staff keep a close check on how all pupils, especially those with particular needs, are getting on and act quickly to provide support when needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Day-to-day routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. Learning resources are good and the school's facilities are used imaginatively. Parents and the community are very supportive of the school. The headteacher is successfully involving all staff in developing this expanding school. Teaching staff benefit from good

opportunities for professional development and support staff are valued members of the team. Subject leaders' responsibilities in English, mathematics and science have recently changed in order to increase middle managers' role in analysing statutory test and assessment results, reviewing teachers' planning and scrutinising pupils' work. This is helping them gain a closer understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. The school improvement plan, although lengthy, has its priorities clearly focused on raising standards. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties. Its members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings. With the new school building completed, governors are becoming more involved in working with subject leaders to help them evaluate the school's work.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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

29 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Hills C of E Primary School, Spalding, PE12 6DL

I very much enjoyed visiting your school last week. Thank you very much for making me so welcome. I was pleased to see your work in lessons and to learn about all the other interesting things you do in school. I particularly liked hearing the choir sing and the tin whistle band play in assembly, and seeing the many different ways in which you keep yourselves fit and healthy. I am delighted that you so enjoy coming to school and congratulate you on your good attendance. I am impressed by your good behaviour and that you get on well with each other and the staff.

Your new school building and grounds are impressive. Mrs Turnell and the staff are working hard to help you make the best use of them in your learning. They make good use of the interactive whiteboards and ICT to make your lessons interesting and help you find things out for yourselves. The staff know you very well and take excellent care of you. They mark your work carefully and give you good advice to help you improve. You know your targets for improvement and the staff make sure that you have extra help when you need it to reach these. This is why you make good progress in the school.

Mrs Turnell has planned lots of exciting things to improve the school further. I have suggested that she and the staff do three things in particular. First, some of you could do even better in writing and when solving problems in mathematics. Second, I am asking your teachers to make sure that the work for those of you who learn at a faster rate is always challenging. Third, teachers have recently taken on new responsibilities for subjects such as English, mathematics and science and they need to get to know just how well you are doing in these and what you need to do to improve further.

Each and everyone of you has an important part to play in helping the school meet these targets. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead Inspector