



# Westfield School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 131933  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 293893  
**Inspection date** 29 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Margaret Goodchild

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>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Highfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Bourne End
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		SL8 5BE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 533125
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	28	<b>Fax number</b>	01628 523345
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms Christine Lock
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Geoff Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves the needs of primary aged pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, an increasing number of whom have additional learning difficulties. The majority of pupils join the school during Years 5 and 6; there are no children under five at present. There are far more boys than girls and pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, a high proportion of pupils were entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is low as a result of pupils' previous difficulties in attending mainstream school.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.

The school has faced serious difficulties over the last 18 months, including major problems in recruiting staff. It has been without a deputy headteacher since July 2005 and the senior teacher is currently absent. Furthermore, three teachers have left and the school has only been able to find one permanent replacement: two classes are covered by temporary teachers. The school has begun to recover in some areas but it has lost a lot of ground since the last inspection, when it was found to be very good. Systems for monitoring the school's work are not well enough established and there are insufficient senior staff in place to take the school forward.

In spite of these difficulties, the school is providing an acceptable education and parents express a very high level of satisfaction with its work. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and particularly in their behaviour. They are well cared for and the school enables a good number of pupils to return successfully to mainstream school. Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory overall and pupils in classes with established teachers achieve well.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching. Pupils' work shows that the learning of the oldest pupils has suffered as a result of staffing difficulties and some inadequate teaching, but the school is now using its existing staff as best it can to reduce the impact of difficulties on pupils' progress. Teaching has a number of strengths, but progress is often weaker when pupils are given work that is too easy for them.

The school has collected a significant amount of information about what pupils know, understand and can do but assessment information is not used sufficiently in planning lessons, in setting specific learning targets or informing pupils about how to improve their work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the staffing and strategic leadership of the school and ensure there are rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the school's work.
- Raise pupils' achievement and involve them as active learners by ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations in the work that they set and the questions that they ask.
- Strengthen the way assessment information is used from day to day in planning lessons, in setting individual targets and making pupils aware of the next steps in their learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are below average as a result of pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly in line with the national average in recent years although test results in 2006 were adversely affected by staffing difficulties. Pupils in some classes are making good progress as a result of good and occasionally outstanding teaching. In most other classes, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The progress of some older pupils has suffered as a result of the use of a series of temporary teachers and some inadequate teaching. Current arrangements in these classes ensure that pupils are making satisfactory progress towards challenging targets. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to reintegrate a relatively high proportion of pupils successfully into mainstream school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good and pupils attend regularly. Most pupils like coming to school and show a desire to improve their behaviour. They behave well when they come together as a whole school, for instance, for assemblies or when they sit together to eat in class groups at lunchtimes. Behaviour in class is good where teaching stimulates pupils' interest in learning. The behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory where teaching is less engaging, although a few pupils become restless in these lessons. Pupils are increasingly willing to reflect on their behaviour and value the 'golden time' that is provided as a reward when they apply themselves well. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in grasping the importance of healthy eating and they take part in an increasing range of sporting activities. They feel able to talk to the staff, and the school council communicates pupils' views so that they contribute to school improvement. Pupils regularly take part in charitable events and sing Christmas songs, for instance, at the local library and at a day centre for the elderly. The progress that they make in gaining basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. However, there is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching by established teachers. Where teaching is good, teachers engage pupils with motivating tasks and ask probing questions that involve them in solving challenging problems. Pupils are keen to respond and willing to work hard in these lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning identifies what the class

is meant to learn but the work is not demanding enough for some pupils and this gives rise to minor restlessness.

Teaching assistants provide good support to teachers as well as contributing significantly to pupils' learning. The school has, rightly, identified the need to make greater use of information and communication technology. Parents are appropriately involved in decisions that are made about their children and homework is set regularly, although it is not always challenging enough.

The school has collected a significant amount of assessment information, especially in literacy and numeracy, and uses this to set targets and predict the levels pupils are expected to reach. Teachers frequently assess pupils' progress at the end of lessons and units of work, and the school has begun to introduce a system for identifying the next steps in pupils' learning. At present, this type of information is not used consistently, however, to match work to the needs of individual pupils, to make them aware of the next steps in their learning or to set precise targets in individual education plans.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum provides a range of learning opportunities that are appropriately matched to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils experiencing literacy difficulties receive weekly individual support and pupils who are ready to reintegrate into mainstream school are identified and supported effectively. The school is in the process of revising its curriculum to give greater emphasis to personal and social education, and citizenship, and it has begun to forge stronger links between subjects in order to meet more fully the needs of pupils with the most severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Links with a local secondary school are strengthening the opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, and the curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of other activities. There are no lunchtime or after school clubs, but pupils have opportunities to go on a fair number of educational visits. A termly 'passport to the world' week makes pupils aware of the culture, history and geography of different countries, and the school plans to introduce termly enrichment weeks.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school cares well for its pupils and provides them with good personal support. The school has good links with external agencies and, staff regularly discuss pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs in order to target support where it is most needed. There have been significant improvements in the way behaviour is managed and children protected: after a period of difficulty, both areas are now good and the school is orderly. The school has effective procedures in place for safeguarding pupils and ensuring that their health is promoted. The school works well with mainstream schools to support pupils who are ready to reintegrate. Pupils receive some guidance about what to do to improve their work but this is not as consistent or well developed as it should be.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. The school has declined since the last inspection, when it was found to be very good, and it is not in a secure position to move forward. The local authority conducted reviews of the school, in the summer of 2005 and again very recently. These found leadership and management to be inadequate.

The school lacks a coherent senior management team and has been unable to recruit permanent teachers to fill two vacancies. It has been without a deputy head since July 2005 and the senior teacher is currently absent. During the headteacher's absence from the school for a term in Autumn 2005, the school was led by two acting headteachers. This period of uncertainty contributed to a weakening of school systems. Staff morale is now good and there is evidence of significant recovery in some areas, although there is a great deal of work still to be done. The local authority has worked closely with the school, especially in improving systems for managing pupils' behaviour and those for protecting children. There has been some detailed evaluation and analysis of the school's work and appropriate strategies are being employed to support temporary teachers. The very recent delegation of some management responsibilities to a highly effective teacher has begun to provide some support to the headteacher but this has not yet had time to have a positive impact on teaching. Insufficient monitoring has taken place over the last year, especially in relation to teaching and learning, although the school is aware of the main areas requiring attention. Established teachers fulfil their responsibilities well within their own classes but the role of subject co-ordinators is not properly developed.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is becoming more involved in checking the school's effectiveness for itself and governors have undergone training to improve their monitoring skills. They understand the seriousness of the school's current position and are committed to working with managers and staff to improve the school.

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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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### 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	3

### 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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

### 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>	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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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	4
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?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school, and I would particularly like to thank those pupils who showed me their work. I am writing now to tell you what I found out about the school.

It was good to know that most of you like school, that you are well cared for and feel there is an adult you can talk to if you have a problem. You are making good progress in improving your behaviour and some of you have improved so much that you are nearly ready to go back to mainstream school. This is really good. The school is helping you to find out about healthy eating, so it is really important that you remember what you have been told when you make choices about what to eat. I was pleased to see that you have been involved in collecting money for charities and that the school council puts forward your ideas about how the school could be improved.

Some of you are making good progress with your work, especially those of you in Oak Class, and in classes where teachers have worked in the school for quite a long time. The school has had problems in finding enough teachers but it is trying hard to make sure this does not affect your learning. Where teaching is good, I could see that you enjoy lessons and want to do well.

I have asked the school to make some improvements. These are the things it needs to do:

- make sure the school has enough managers and try to get more teaching staff
- make sure all the teaching is interesting and that you get work that is not too easy
- make better use of information about what you can already do so that work is matched exactly to the next steps in your learning and so that you know what to do to improve.

You can help the headteacher and your other teachers by behaving really well and trying hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

M GoodchildLead Inspector