

Westmorland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132121
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	293948
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Thompson
Headteacher	Mr Martin Henderson
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2005
School address	Westmorland Drive Brinnington Stockport Cheshire SK5 8HH
Telephone number	0161 4069403
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school of average size, situated within an area of economic and social disadvantage on the outskirts of Stockport. Almost all pupils are White British and have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds the national Healthy Schools Standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Westmorland provides a good quality education, with evidence of good and continuous improvement since its last inspection. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to make further improvement. It is well led and managed. The energetic headteacher shares with staff and governors a clear vision for improvement and a determination to achieve it. The school's leaders are addressing considerable challenges in their drive to raise standards. They have forged greatly improved links between home and school and are working successfully alongside the pupils' families to help them to become partners in the education of their children. Parents appreciate this, expressing great pride in the school and its achievements and identifying strongly with its aims and activities. They consider that the school has a high profile in the community; one described it as having 'improved beyond recognition'.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are a high priority and this underpins the school's work to raise achievement. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is well below age-related expectations. In the Reception class, where teaching is exceptionally good, the school achieves a remarkable transformation in pupils' dispositions and attitudes; as a result they enter Year 1 as enthusiastic learners. This enthusiasm and interest are sustained throughout the years that follow, partly because learning activities are well planned, interesting and well presented. Additionally, the school pays detailed attention to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. By the end of Year 6, standards remain well below average, but national test results have shown consistent improvement over the past four years. Pupils' achievement is good in relation to their starting points. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good.

The good curriculum, enhanced well by information and communication technology and extra-curricular activities, fosters pupils' needs and interests well. However, despite the otherwise good curriculum in the Foundation Stage, provision is limited by an incomplete outdoor learning area. The school has not fully addressed bridging the gap between the Foundation Stage and Year 1. This means that those pupils who are not ready for more formal learning do not continue to follow a curriculum best suited to their needs when they enter Year 1.

Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of healthy and safe lifestyles and also a very well developed sense of personal responsibility; these factors prepare them well for the future. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' personal development is good and is tracked as carefully as their progress in learning. The pupils make an exceptionally good contribution to their own community, in school and in the locality. Older pupils readily take responsibility, acting as helpers and positive role models for younger pupils, and also play a leading part in many community events.

The school has worked hard to improve attendance through a comprehensive programme of incentives and support for identified families, and through establishing a successful breakfast club. These efforts have brought about an improvement, but attendance figures are still not close enough to the national average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Strengthen the curriculum between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress through the school. Many children start with poor skills on entry to the Reception class. Most make rapid progress in Reception and enter Year 1 with positive attitudes to learning. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and positive attitudes are maintained. Pupils go on to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards, as measured in national tests at the end of Year 6, show year-on-year improvement, although they have not yet reached national average levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress through the school, as a result of exceptionally good provision for them. The school's good provision for its more able pupils is not yet fully reflected in the numbers of pupils achieving higher levels in national tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. It is fostered through visits to local places of worship and events such as the recent multicultural day, which promote awareness and celebration of cultural diversity. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. For example, there are many opportunities for them to be physically active. Very good relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves ensure that they are happy, secure and confident. Older pupils show a mature sense of responsibility and a willingness to be helpful in school and in the local community. They join in local events and give strong support to local charities. Attendance rates are below average but have improved considerably, as the school's many supportive strategies are beginning to take effect. As a result, attendance is judged satisfactory, despite needing further improvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic learners. This is because teachers use a very wide range of strategies to engage their interests and give them a clear understanding of the purposes of the learning tasks and activities. Well planned lessons cater for the full range of ability. Work is challenging and stimulating. Pupils are supported by good teamwork between teachers and skilled learning support assistants. In most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk, so that pupils are continuously engaged. Marking is detailed; pupils find this helpful and the work in their books shows that they take advice from the encouraging and developmental comments. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is extremely good. These pupils make very good progress as a result of early intervention and good additional support. The school has been particularly successful in developing a wide range of additional learning programmes and this is raising pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is well designed. Subjects are taught in blocked units of work, and this organisation helps to maintain interest and enjoyment for the pupils, allowing them to focus on areas of study in greater depth. Visits to museums, local places of interest and places of worship widen the pupils' experience, and a good range of extra-curricular activities supports learning and personal development. The more able pupils are identified and supported well, with teaching strategies to help develop individual talents, including coaching and specialist teaching for pupils' sporting and creative skills. Curriculum provision for the less able pupils is supplemented by very well planned additional learning programmes which accelerate their progress. The good curriculum in the Foundation Stage meets the needs of the children well, although outdoor provision is not yet complete. In Year 1, the curriculum is not associated closely enough with that of the Reception class in order fully to meet the needs of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Parents value this highly and say that they feel part of the school and can access a wide range of advice and support there. The learning mentor works closely with pupils, their families and external agencies, including health and welfare support. Family learning courses assist parents' growing involvement in supporting their children's learning. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are well established. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given very good individual plans which are subject to careful and regular review. Pupils are aware of the targets that are set for them in lessons and they are confident that they know what they should do to improve their work. Transition to secondary education is supported well by links with the high school. However, transition from the Foundation Stage into Year 1 is not supported sufficiently well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the headteacher's strong leadership, the vision and responsibility for school improvement are shared by governors and by staff at all levels. Subject leaders help to monitor and evaluate the school's work with rigour. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, although the school judges some aspects of its work and its overall effectiveness too harshly. Prompt and appropriate action is taken to tackle identified areas for development. For example, the school is currently reviewing its provision in Year 1. With the support of the talented deputy headteacher, the headteacher has created an effective and united staff team. The school has worked hard to raise the community's aspirations for its pupils by setting high expectations for their achievement and by providing good teaching and learning. Parents can now see that good progress is possible, as standards are consistently rising. Governors are beginning to play a more active role in school management and are developing their capacity to act as 'critical friends' to hold the school to account.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	1

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	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	1
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?	2

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	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 Westmorland Primary School, Stockport, SK5 8HH

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First, however, the inspectors would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and to say how much we enjoyed meeting you in your lessons and around the school. You were very helpful and polite and we were delighted to see how much you all enjoy being at Westmorland. The inspection found that Westmorland is a good school. The headteacher and the staff look after you well and give you the help and support that you need. Your lessons are planned well by your teachers so that they are lively and interesting. For these reasons and because you work hard and concentrate well in lessons, you are making good progress and are becoming confident learners. We saw that in all of the lessons we watched.

We were also very impressed by the way the school is helping and encouraging you to be thoughtful about other people's needs. We saw how good you are at carrying out responsibilities, for example through the student council and through acting as play leaders and buddies. Your involvement in local events, for example the Lantern Parade, and the fund-raising work you do for local charities are further very good examples of this.

You are now much better at coming to school regularly and the staff have worked hard to help you with this, so that you now have a better understanding of how important good attendance is. There is still more improvement needed, however, in order to bring attendance at Westmorland into line with other schools. You and your families can help the school to achieve this goal by making sure that your attendance is as good as it can possibly be.

To help the school to continue improving, we have asked the headteacher and the staff to make closer links between the work planned for the children in Reception and for those in Key Stage 1, as we feel this will help children to make even better progress in Year 1 and Year 2.

We left your school feeling confident that it will continue to improve. We can clearly see why your families are so pleased with the school and so proud of your good progress. Keep on trying your best and being happy learners!