

# Westfield Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134742
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	294165
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	375
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms M Coghlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Timothy Sherriff
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Montrose Avenue Pemberton Wigan Lancashire WN5 9XN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 776007
<b>Fax number</b>	01942 776008

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

This large school was newly formed in September 2005 but only moved to its purpose built site in June 2006. An unusually large proportion of pupils is eligible to receive free school meals and significant numbers arrive or leave the school partway through their primary education. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage but there are a few for whom English is an additional language. Above average numbers have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school acts as a fully integrated resource base for the local authority where the complex needs of up to 18 pupils, usually of Foundation Stage age, can be observed and assessed for a maximum of three terms. It is part of the Kingsbridge Education Improvement Partnership with strong links to the neighbouring high school. It has recently been awarded the ActiveMark.

Since September 2006, the school has operated as a children's centre providing wraparound care for children age 0 to 11. A separate inspection of the childcare provision was conducted in January 2007.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Westfield is a good, happy school which serves its pupils very well. From the amalgamation of two schools has emerged a beacon of hope which is encouraging increasing numbers of parents to become involved in their children's education and to raise the level of their own skills and self-esteem at the same time. As one commented, 'Thanks to the school, we're going up in the world!'. Extensive partnerships with other schools, private and public organisations add greatly to pupils' experiences. They also strengthen the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by staff. This helps to lower the barriers to learning that many pupils face. While modest about its quality in some areas, the school knows itself well, provides good value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

The overwhelming majority of children who enter Nursery have low level skills in all areas of learning. In the stimulating Foundation Stage, they make good progress but still have well below expected skills by the end of their Reception year. With skilled diagnosis and support, the children in the integrated resource base make similarly good progress. The many pupils who arrive partway through their education, including into Years 5 and 6, generally have low levels of attainment. Some have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although pupils achieve well in both their personal and their academic development, standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. Staff's high expectations and positive management help pupils to grow in confidence and self-belief so that they thoroughly enjoy their learning and behave well. Pupils generally act safely. Good quality relationships mean that they are supportive of each other. Their personal development is good. The excellent curriculum meets their needs very well and fills in gaps in their experience. Pupils are well aware of how to stay healthy and fit. Staff do well to help them make the most of the cramped and underdeveloped outdoor areas.

Good quality teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils are very clear about what they are expected to do, and they are regularly required to explain their understanding of what they have learned. This means that teachers can adapt their teaching to cover any weaknesses and also that pupils are well aware of the progress they are making. However, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always guide pupils sufficiently well about the next steps to take to improve their work.

Outstanding leadership and teamwork have steered the school so that it operates as a vibrant, united learning community. Careful monitoring of pupils' responses and standards leads to effective action. Staff form a cohesive team that works together very well in the pupils' best interests. The exceptional headteacher brings out the best in his staff members and also in his pupils so as to equip them with the skills to secure their future economic well-being.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that, in their marking, all teachers provide helpful guidance for pupils about how to improve their work, so that they make better progress
- Develop the playground so that it provides enhanced opportunities for learning and play.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement throughout the school is good. When children join Nursery, many find it difficult to communicate, to share with others or to recognise basic shapes or colours. Overall, their attainment is low. In the calm, well structured and inviting Foundation Stage classrooms, they make good progress, growing increasingly curious, knowledgeable, independent and willing to chat with others. Although they achieve well, many still enter Year 1 working at the levels expected of considerably younger children. Those children who are integrated into the Foundation Stage for assessment of their special educational needs make good progress alongside their peers and many join mainstream education once their exact needs have been identified.

Throughout the rest of the school pupils continue to make good progress, although standards at the end of Year 6 remain below average. The school exceeded its challenging targets in English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2006. Termly tracking of progress in these two subjects leads to swift extra support when needed. For example, small-group work, including sessions designed to boost the confidence of average attainers in Year 6, is proving effective in helping pupils achieve their full potential. Good quality support for pupils who are gifted and talented, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or for whom English is an additional language ensures that they make as good progress as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that they are polite, helpful and kind and show responsible attitudes towards their work and school life. They greatly enjoy school and show real enthusiasm for learning. Their positive response to teachers' consistent guidance and reminders means that they behave well both in and out of lessons. Playtime behaviour is boisterous but pupils generally act safely and show awareness of others' needs in the cramped playgrounds. They readily take on responsibility, for example as playleaders or monitors. School council members are proud of their say in school life which has led to, for instance, blinds in classrooms and pupils who are litter pickers at breaktimes. High quality displays, of artefacts loaned from the local arts centre and pupils' work created together with artists in residence, greatly enhance the learning environment. They also demonstrate pupils' spiritual response to life and awareness of the richness of other cultures. Pupils cooperate well with each other and with staff and understand that they are at school to work. They recognise that these skills prepare them well for their next school and later life. Attendance levels are below average, adversely affected by a small number of families, and a steady stream of latecomers who trickle in each morning. However, the school's concerted efforts, led by learning mentors, are having a positive effect, with sustained improvements over the current year.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good quality, and at times excellent, teaching throughout the school engages pupils' attention and leads to good quality learning. Lessons are well planned to cater for different needs and are almost always lively and interesting. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to

do their best. Teachers' clear explanations and probing questioning mean pupils know what is expected and have to think hard about what they are learning. Catchy phrases such as, 'Will your sentence have yawn factor or X factor?' spur pupils to extra efforts. Good quality relationships and skilful behaviour management mean that lessons move with good pace and pupils work purposefully. A variety of activities, good use of visual clues via interactive whiteboards, and well deployed teaching assistants ensure that pupils remain on task, even though some pupils find it hard to sustain their concentration. In a few lessons, teachers expect pupils to sit and listen for too long and, consequently, they miss opportunities to enable the pupils to extend their learning. Although most teachers provide helpful guidance when marking pupils' work in English, this is not consistent throughout the school or in other subjects such as science.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum excites pupils' interest and caters very effectively for their needs. While sharply focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, it includes many creative ways of developing pupils' personal skills that will stand them in good stead for later life. Well planned early morning activities mean pupils settle calmly while teachers can talk with parents or a distressed child so that they can enjoy the day and concentrate on learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is imaginative and very well organised, and caters for all areas of learning both inside and outside. It also serves very well the needs of the children with more complex needs. Thanks to partnership with outside agencies, Adventure Based Learning (ABL) extends throughout the holidays as well as lesson time. Through this, all pupils have opportunities to sample such experiences as rock climbing or water sports which effectively boost their confidence and thinking skills. Further innovative methods of developing pupils' skills such as observation and deduction, being trialled successfully in Year 4, will shortly extend across the school. Short physical education sessions at the beginning of each afternoon playtime complement more prolonged lessons and are much enjoyed by one and all. During these sessions, staff make best use of the underdeveloped outdoor areas. Visitors and visits add further enrichment, as does the teaching of French throughout the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The high quality care, guidance and support which all staff offer pupils and their families are among the school's greatest strengths. Excellent teamwork and collaboration with outside agencies ensure that individual needs, whether emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties or unfamiliarity with English, are swiftly identified and effective support provided. This enables all pupils to make the most of opportunities offered and to achieve well. Robust procedures to promote child protection, health and safety, and the safe recruitment of staff are in place. Parents are made very welcome in school and value highly the support it provides. Pupils will confide in staff; they are given time and equipped with the skills to help them understand their emotions and actions. Teachers and teaching assistants give good academic guidance in lessons and set targets in English and mathematics, so that pupils understand what they should be aiming to achieve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Exceptional leadership and management have guided the school smoothly through immense upheaval so that it operates as a highly effective learning community. Staff at all levels are very clear about their roles, responsibilities and expectations and all show great commitment to the pupils' personal and academic well-being. As one commented, 'Being kind and caring is not enough, we need to help the children succeed in life.' The phase leaders for early years, Years 1 to 4, and Years 5 and 6 act as key disseminators of information and monitors of consistency. The business manager provides excellent financial and administrative backup which ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Members of the wider management team have clearly defined responsibilities and lead project teams which ensure that the school priorities are put into effective action. Governors are exceptionally committed to and knowledgeable about the school and the neighbourhood. This means that they can ably hold the school to account while providing unusually high levels of support. Key to the creation of this impressive learning environment are the roles of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher acts as a dynamic role model. Her skill and commitment in merging into a manageable system all information from two schools about pupils' standards in English and mathematics has ensured that class teachers and management can readily track individuals' progress and take timely action. Acting as the fulcrum for all this activity is the outstanding headteacher whose strategic thinking, organisation, team-building skills and, above all, passion to provide the best for the pupils, underpin the school's success.

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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>	<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?	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	1
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	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

<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	1
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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to say that we thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school just before you broke up for Easter and would like to thank you very much for welcoming us in such a friendly manner. Thank you, also, to those of you who talked with us about your work and what it is like to be a pupil at Westfield.

We were very impressed by how well everyone connected with Westfield has worked together to make sure that it is a good school. Many of you find learning quite difficult but you enjoy your lessons and are prepared to try hard with your work so you make good progress. This is because your teachers organise interesting things for you to do and explain them clearly so you understand what is expected of you. Activities such as the PE sessions before afternoon break and Activity Based Learning are great fun and help you to think more quickly and grow in confidence. All the excellent support and guidance that staff offer you and your families also helps with this. You work and play together well, and your behaviour is good. You care about each other and were very polite towards us. Your headteacher, all the other senior staff members and the governors are really good at thinking about how to help you make the most of your time at school. They provide you with a great learning environment - we loved your artwork - and plenty of ways to help you improve your literacy, numeracy and other skills so that you are well prepared for later life.

To make your school even better we have asked them to:

- make sure that all teachers put helpful comments when they mark your work so you understand how to improve it
- make the playgrounds more interesting and, if possible, less cramped so that they provide better quality areas in which you can work and play.

Your job will be to continue to enjoy learning and to try your best to arrive on time and attend every day.