



Westgate Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120691
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 294609
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Roger Brown

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Westgate
School category	Foundation		Lincoln
Age range of pupils	7–11		Lincolnshire LN1 3BC
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01522 528308
Number on roll (school)	426	Fax number	01522 533241
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Hopkins
		Headteacher	Mr Tim Culpin
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large junior school serves the communities of Lincoln city centre and the adjacent areas. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals or from minority ethnic groups are below the national average. In the past year there has been a significant rise in the number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities as improved systems for identification have been introduced. The proportion of these pupils is now above the national average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is still average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average, but is even higher in some years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school has made considerable advances since the previous inspection 14 months ago, and the new leaders have taken decisive action to begin remedying shortcomings that were apparent then. They have an accurate view of provision. There is more to do, but morale in the school is now good and most staff are fully committed to driving the school forward towards higher levels of achievement and success.

Standards were above average at the time of the last inspection, and while they remain so, they are starting to improve. The difference now is that pupils are beginning to show accelerated rates of progress and their achievement, although still satisfactory, is improving rather than marking time.

The new leadership has instigated a marked cultural change in the school. The headteacher and the leadership team have shown the will and ability to begin to tackle outstanding issues and there is a momentum that is creating tangible benefits for the pupils. Pupils recognise this and are excited by the way they are now consulted and engaged in the developments. They like the new reward system. They are pleased with the new homework system and recognise that, in the best lessons, there is a real buzz about learning. Pupils know that, although they have to work hard in these lessons, and are challenged by what they are doing, it excites them. However, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently at this level and there is still some way to go to bring all lessons up towards the standard of the best.

The school is making a concerted effort to make the curriculum more creative. There is improved use of information and communication technology (ICT), which is now being used to good effect in many lessons, but it takes time to consolidate these advances. Plans designed to link subjects and to make the work match the needs and interests of pupils have yet to have a significant impact.

Pupils' personal development and well-being continues to be good and has developed, thanks to a greater emphasis on the healthy schools agenda. There is still room for some improvement in pupils' cultural and spiritual development which, although satisfactory, is not seen as a high priority. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are now good. This improvement results from the introduction of systems for tracking pupils' progress. The information provided is beginning to be used to link assessment information to targets for individuals and groups. This is allowing staff to inform pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. This focus is improving pupils' progress.

The greatest improvement at the school has been in its leadership. The highly effective headteacher is ably supported by the leadership team and together they have begun to restore the school back to the point where it is effective and efficient once more. However, a small group of staff is not yet making an effective contribution and this is slowing the pace of development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning.
- Involve all teachers in leading improvement.
- Fully implement the plans to improve the quality of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the school have been above average for some years. However, given that pupils start the school with levels of attainment that are at least above average and, in some year groups, even higher, the fact that they leave at the end of Year 6 with above average levels of attainment is only showing satisfactory progress. During the past year this has been changing and there is now acceleration in the progress that most pupils make. This improvement is starting to happen in Year 3, and again in Years 5 and 6. The problem is that the increase in progress is not yet consistent across all year groups, or consolidated with long-term gains. Nevertheless, there are now clear indications from the school's assessments that advances are being made in pupils' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, they get on well together and behaviour is good. They say that there is no bullying and any falling out or squabbles are dealt with effectively. Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is always someone to go to with worries or concerns. Pupils are involved with the local community through links with the cathedral, several local churches and by taking an active part at the Lincoln Christmas Market. They now have a good understanding of what is needed to maintain a healthy life style. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility through activities such as the school council. The staff listen to the pupils' suggestions about improving the school and take action when they can, for example, when developing the new behaviour policy and homework programme. Through assemblies, and personal and social education, pupils develop a good understanding and awareness of moral and social issues. They have a satisfactory understanding of spiritual and cultural matters; the school has not identified the development of these areas as a priority yet. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's judgment that teaching and learning are satisfactory is accurate. The quality ranges widely, from adequate to outstanding and it is this inconsistency that

the school is seeking to address. The leadership team, supported by governors, has taken very positive steps to improve the overall quality of teaching, but this progress is not fully established. When teaching is most effective, teachers' expectations are high, the work that pupils do is matched to their capabilities, and they are clear about how they need to improve. Some staff are making excellent use of new technology to make lessons more interesting and relevant. The quality of marking has improved, but is inconsistent across the school. Effective management of pupils results in good behaviour. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils and are helping pupils with special educational needs to make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met, but the recent thoughtful improvements designed to link subjects, while matching the needs and interests of pupils, have yet to have a significant impact. Design and technology, which was a weakness, has improved since the last inspection. The recent installation of interactive white boards has raised the levels of pupils' involvement in information and communication technology (ICT), but the computer suite is under-used, restricting pupils' opportunities to develop their skills and understanding in this area. This also restricts their chance to use ICT as a research tool or to use it to support their learning across other subjects. The wider curriculum is enriched through visits, visitors and an appropriate range of clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school now provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils, enabling them to feel safe, happy and valued. Following consultation with the pupils, the school has developed positive strategies to manage their behaviour. Pupils are happy in school and know that, should they have a problem, there is always someone they can go to. Procedures for child protection are in place, as are the arrangements and implementation of health and safety checks and risk assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported, enabling them to make similar progress to that of other pupils. However, systems to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils are inadequate.

The school has recently adopted good procedures to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress. These are used well to identify pupils with learning difficulties as early as possible and to set class and individual targets so that most pupils have a growing understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher and leadership team have made a very effective start to their task of improving the school. They have been greatly aided in this process by a revitalised and now effective governing body. The introduction of systems for tracking pupils' progress, alongside the reintroduced performance management process means that the leadership understands the issues in the school very clearly. Performance is now monitored and evaluated, but the improvements are only just beginning. There is still much to do, not least of which is the need to engage all teachers in taking responsibility for further improvement. Most staff use their initiative, but not all. At present, not all resources, including staff, are deployed as effectively as they might be; much time and effort has to be focused on remedying past deficiencies. As a result of the improvements already achieved, the school now represents satisfactory value for money and its continuing capacity for improvement is now good.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
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

26 January 2007

Dear Children,

Westgate Junior School, Westgate, Lincoln LN1 3BQ

Thank you for the warm welcome when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to be with you. We enjoyed watching your classes and we especially enjoyed talking to you about your work and what happens in your school.

We thought that there were many good things about your school:

- The standard of your work is high.
- You are now consulted about how things can be improved.
- Your teachers now make sure that you know how well you are doing and tell you what you need to do to make your work even better.
- You behave well and care for each other.

However, I would like your teachers to make some further changes:

- Try and make all lessons as fascinating and as exciting as the best ones we saw.
- Involve everybody in trying new ideas and improving your school even more.
- Put in place their plans to make the subjects you study more interesting.

Many of your parents wrote to me to say that they really like your school and are pleased with the way you are cared for and taught. Some were still worried that the changes in your school had not had long enough to make it really improve, but we believe that Mr Culpin will make sure that it does. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent with you in your school.

Best wishes for the future,

Roger Brown Lead Inspector