

# Westwood Community Junior School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110641
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310373
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike (Michael) Best

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	380
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Field
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Maple Grove March Cambridgeshire PE15 8JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01354 653033
<b>Fax number</b>	01354 661176

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the achievement of pupils in English;
- teachers' use of information about what pupils know and can do to set pupils targets and help them to improve their work;
- the impact of what the school provides on pupils' personal development and well-being.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's documentation and discussions with pupils, parents, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The number of pupils on roll is higher than in most primary schools and there are more boys than girls in three of the four year groups. The school is popular and over-subscribed. Pupils, predominantly from White British backgrounds, come from a mixture of privately owned and rented homes in the town of March and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is smaller than average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.

When they join the school, pupils' standards are generally slightly below the national averages and represent a very wide range of ability. Most pupils join the school in Year 3 from the neighbouring infant school. Although the overall number of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time is similar to other schools, a small but significant number transfer from other schools because of their learning and behavioural difficulties. The numbers of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above the national average. The proportion with a statement outlining their special educational need is broadly average.

The school holds the Football Association's Charter Mark for extra-curricular activities (2005) and the Active School award (2007). It participates in the Health Promoting Schools' Initiative (2007) and has Investors in People status (2005). Many long-serving members of staff have recently retired and more, including the headteacher, are retiring at the end of the school year.

## 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 that serves its pupils well. It has some outstanding features, particularly the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents are highly supportive of the school and the provision it makes for their children. Excellent forward planning by senior managers and the governing body is ensuring the smooth transition of responsibilities during a period of staff changes. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement. It provides good value for money.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They thoroughly enjoy school and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The school is calm and welcoming, and pupils have a high level of respect for adults and each other. This is reciprocated by staff who have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work. Pupils new to the school, some of whom have previously found it difficult to control their behaviour and concentrate on their work, say that they quickly adapt to the 'Westwood way' because their new friends help them to settle in and staff give them firm but kind support. The school is working with the local authority and others to support the small but significant minority of families who do not send their children to school regularly. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and say they have no hesitation in turning to a member of staff if they need help. They are very knowledgeable about healthy living and proud of the work they do in the school garden, which helps to supply the school kitchen. Pupils take their many responsibilities in school very seriously and value the opportunity to represent the school in sporting and other activities. They develop a good range of skills and experiences that prepare them well for the future.

This positive and supportive climate successfully underpins pupils' good achievement. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English, slightly above average in mathematics and above average in science, with overall standards increasing year-on-year since the last inspection. In the 2007 statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2, boys performed better than girls in mathematics and science, and reached similar levels to girls in English. Results exceeded the school's targets in mathematics and in English at Level 4 (the level expected for pupils at this age), but fell short of the target for the higher level (Level 5) in English. In writing in English, pupils' results were lower than reading and the school has rightly identified this as a priority for development. Many pupils lack the academic stamina to plan and produce longer pieces of quality writing both in English and in other subjects. A recently introduced scheme to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of sounds and letters is successfully helping them, particularly those who learn at slower rates, to make good progress in the development of their literacy skills. Likewise, pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make good progress because they are following a well-structured programme.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are exceptionally well-managed and proceed at a good pace. Pupils are keen and ready to learn, eager to respond to questions and quick to get down to their work. They take a pride in the presentation of their work and their behaviour, and work very well with each other. Pupils demonstrate the willingness and confidence to 'have a go' at answering questions and to think through solutions to practical problems because they know that staff and their fellow pupils value what they have to say.

Pupils enjoy a good range of curricular and other activities, including a modern foreign language and a wide range of sporting activities. Throughout the school, pupils are taught in ability

groups for English and mathematics, and in mixed ability groups for other subjects. Overall, teachers plan well for the different abilities of pupils within their classes and teaching groups. Their provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is consistently good and support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' sustained progress. However, more able pupils are not always fully challenged. A contributory factor is that there are inconsistencies in the quality of the learning objectives and success criteria that teachers share with their pupils at the start of lessons. In the best practice, these are sharply focussed and provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they are going to learn. In some lessons, however, pupils are not fully sure of what they have achieved or their next steps in learning.

The quality of the school's care, support and guidance is good. Pastoral support is excellent and academic guidance good. Staff make regular checks on pupils' standards of work and the school tracks this using a computer program, providing teachers with a clear picture of each individual's progress compared with that expected of them. In their discussions in lessons, teachers give pupils regular advice as to how they can improve their work. However, this practice is not consistently reflected in teachers' written comments when they mark pupils' work. As a result, pupils are not always secure in their understanding of what they need to do next or of how well they are progressing towards their targets.

Strong leadership and management lie at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher, who is held in high regard by all members of the school community, has a clear and imaginative vision for the school's development. He is well supported by a highly committed and hardworking deputy headteacher and staff, and has been instrumental in planning for continuity during a period of staff turnover. Subject leaders and other managers, many of whom have recently assumed their roles, are keen and enthusiastic. Good systems for monitoring the school's work are increasingly involving middle managers and senior staff set challenging targets for improvement. The governing body is well led and successfully holds the school to account. The arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and the school meets all statutory requirements.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in English and in other subjects.
- Ensure a more consistent approach to teachers' use of information about what pupils know and can do, to let pupils know exactly what they need to concentrate on next to improve their work.

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## Annex A

## 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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

11 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood Community Junior School, March PE15 8JT

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school earlier this week. I greatly enjoyed visiting your classrooms and hearing about all the many things you do in school. I can certainly understand why you enjoy school so much. Westwood is a good school and you are absolutely right to be proud of it. I am very impressed by your excellent behaviour both in lessons and around the school. You quickly settle down at the start of lessons, listen carefully to your teachers and get on with the work you are set. You certainly know all about keeping safe and being healthy, and you take your responsibilities for so many jobs around the school extremely well. I think your school garden is wonderful - you certainly have some 'green fingered' gardeners.

You work hard in lessons and make good progress. You do particularly well in science. You are making good progress in your understanding of sounds and letters, which is helping you improve your reading, and you take great care with your calculations in numeracy. I enjoyed reading your stories and other writing but I think you could do even better, particularly when you are planning and producing longer pieces of work. This is not just in literacy lessons but in other subjects too. Your teachers make regular checks on how well you are doing. I would like them all to make really good use of this information to set you clear targets and, when they are marking your work, tell you more clearly what you need to do to improve.

The staff and governors take good care of you and they want you to do well. Mr Wilson keeps a close eye on what is going on in the school. He and some teachers are retiring at the end of this year. You are quite right when you say that you will miss them. However, you have an important part to play by helping the new staff to settle in and in keeping up the school's high standards.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Mike Best

Lead inspector