

Westfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110698
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310394
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David James
Headteacher	Mr Stuart McCarthy
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2005
School address	Ramsey Road St Ives Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE27 5RG
Telephone number	01480 375005
Fax number	01480 375005

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the local community. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than nationally, the largest of which is British Pakistani: several pupils speak English as an additional language with the majority being bi-lingual. The proportion of pupils with statements for their special educational needs is well above average although the overall percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most pupils, but not all, transfer from the local infant school, and an increasing number of pupils join the school at various points of the school year. Recent awards include Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Activemark (for the school's work in health education and physical education and sports) and a Green Flag award for its work on ecology and green issues. Attainment on entry reflects the full range of ability and shows some year-on-year fluctuation but is generally, overall, broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Most parents are supportive of this good school. Many took the trouble to write about it in warm terms, identifying how much their children enjoy school. They also commented on the progress, the support of staff, the richness of the curriculum and the accessibility and approachability of the headteacher.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school helps pupils develop as young people exceptionally well. The extremely rich curriculum and outstanding enrichment opportunities provide wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to achieve success individually and together. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The result is that Year 6 pupils are socially mature, confident, articulate, well-rounded young people who clearly enjoy learning a great deal and the many opportunities that the school provides. The school has established a strong community where pupils learn, in the words of the hymn regularly sung in assembly, 'to be myself' and to recognise, value and respect differences in people. The headteacher is very visible around the school. He is constantly engaged in informal conversations with the pupils, which contributes to building their self-esteem and brings the community of the school together. Assemblies provide a powerful context to reinforce the school's values and recognise achievement. Behaviour is good because expectations are clear and reinforced in a positive manner. Pupils are confident to approach an adult if troubled and as a result, they feel secure and safe in school.

Currently, pupils make good progress in lessons across the school and over time. The school is helping pupils' academic development with increasing effectiveness so that standards of work in Year 6 are above average and pupils are achieving well. They are on track to meet their targets in the 2009 tests. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. The school uses data well to identify and support pupils who are slipping behind and to target them with additional support. The school supports pupils who find learning difficult effectively so that they make good progress. Bi-lingual pupils in Year 6 are making good progress.

Teaching is good across the school. Teachers tailor work effectively to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress and display very good attitudes towards their work. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils and the school often re-arranges classes in English and mathematics appropriately to target this support. The school's care, guidance and support of pupils are good overall, and some aspects of care are outstanding, such as those which foster pupils' personal development. In particular, the school's senior inclusion worker provides excellent support to help pupils overcome difficulties and make life changes.

Academic guidance is good and supports pupils' academic development. Marking is diligent, identifying what pupils have done well and often pointing out what the pupil needs to do in order to improve further. Pupils know their targets well but staff do not encourage them to become active partners in their learning by sharing with them the National Curriculum levels and grade criteria.

Leadership and management are good. A significant strength of the headteacher's leadership lies in his ability to create strong teamwork amongst staff and the senior leadership team, recognising and valuing individual strengths. As a result, the school has a unity of purpose with a close and sustained focus on pupils' achievement, reinforced effectively through performance management. The school knows itself well. However, processes of monitoring and self-evaluation are not sharply focused on their impact on pupils' learning. Governance is good. The governing

body undertakes suitable training and provides challenge to the school. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop well, indicating the good capacity of the school's leadership to improve the school further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share assessment criteria with pupils so that they are able to take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Evaluate the success of teaching by giving a sharper focus to the impact on pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Historically, the results of the standardised tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently just above average in English, mathematics and science. There has been year-on-year improvement in pupils' progress from their Key Stage 1 results. The unvalidated results for the Year 6 tests in 2008 indicate that standards were broadly average overall last year but above average at the higher Level 5. Achievement is good, particularly in English when judged against the school's baseline assessments made early in Year 3. Girls generally perform better than boys but there is no difference between boys' and girls' active engagement in lessons. The school is aware that access to the language of tests is a barrier for many pupils, particularly for bi-lingual learners. It has set challenging targets for pupils' attainment in 2010.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is above the national average. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what makes a healthy life-style and how to keep themselves safe, for example in their careful use of the internet. Pupils play an active part in the school and local community. They accept responsibilities willingly as play leaders, house leaders, classroom and assembly monitors, and through a rota of office duties that are all used to foster pupils' active involvement in the life of the school. Pupils feel that they have a voice and their views are considered through the school council. Their excellent spiritual, social, moral and cultural development benefits learning and they say that, 'We are all friends here.' Through curriculum topics and charity work, pupils have good opportunities to handle budgets and show enterprise. They have an excellent understanding of ecology and green issues. These factors, along with their mature social, academic and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, plus their positive attitudes to learning, attitudes and confidence, provide a firm foundation for the next steps in their education and future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and know them well. Teaching is enthusiastic, based on good subject knowledge and ensures that lessons catch and hold pupils' attention and interest. Teachers are skilled practitioners and manage pupils' behaviour well. There is a lively pace to learning, effective use of interactive whiteboards and carefully planned lessons to meet the wide-ranging needs of pupils. Good opportunities for pupils to rehearse and share ideas lead to a good emphasis on technical vocabulary, while pupils who find learning difficult

receive good support. Good use is made of ICT to support and boost learning, and attractive displays help create a stimulating environment. There is good teamwork with teaching assistants. In the best lessons, some of which are outstanding, the teaching effectively helps pupils to develop and focus their thinking. However, at times, in some lessons, teachers supply ideas too soon, closing down the potential for pupils' to think for themselves and take ownership of the problem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment and achievement because it provides wide-ranging opportunities for success, boosting pupils' confidence in the process. Staff make meaningful links between subjects to provide contexts where pupils can use and reinforce their English and ICT skills. The school is currently working with a leading mathematics teacher to focus on improving the progress of pupils in mathematics by introducing a specific programme to speed up pupils' computation skills and confidence. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development extremely well. International comparative studies and work about other faiths extend pupils' cultural awareness effectively. Extensive language work, examining how various languages are structured add to this, as well as helping pupils respect those pupils who join the school at an early stage of learning English. Work on anti-bullying, health and relationships education and keeping safe feed directly into pupils' outstanding personal development and sense of citizenship. A wide range of well-attended clubs, trips and extensive use of visitors and visiting specialists all add up to outstanding provision of enrichment opportunities. Residential experiences, along with musical productions, group and teamwork opportunities, all provide wide ranging social experiences as pupils learn to live, play and work together.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements. There is good inter-agency work and liaison with parents. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are effective. All teaching staff are qualified first aiders. Very good systems are in place to support good attendance. Effective liaison and transition projects with the main feeder and receiving schools effectively smooth the transition from one school to another.

Academic guidance and support is good. Effective procedures help pupils to understand the target setting process well, although they do not have sufficient information to put their targets into a context nor appreciate their relative importance in moving on from their current level. This is because teachers do not share information with pupils regularly enough about the National Curriculum levels to help them become aware of the assessment criteria.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's good leadership ensures that the school uses data well to identify priorities and be aware of where it needs to target its efforts. Senior managers and subject leaders are committed to their professional development and are thoughtful and reflective about what they are doing. However, they do not focus enough on the impact of their work on pupils' learning when monitoring their effectiveness. The school works hard to foster equal

opportunities, break down barriers and raise pupils' aspirations through effective self-evaluation processes and target setting. Effective governance ensures that the school's strategy for community cohesion is good because it has a clear understanding of its diverse nature and works hard to bind together the various groups in the school. The school ensures that no pupils are disadvantaged for financial reasons and has successfully appointed two bi-lingual teaching assistants to work with pupils and their families. It has also started to run periodic informal meetings for mothers of bi-lingual pupils to discuss aspects of school life and benefit pupils' learning.

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 ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield Junior School, St Ives, PE27 5RG

Thank you making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our two days in Westfield very much. I particularly enjoyed participating and singing in your assemblies, even if I didn't really know the tunes! My particular thanks go to those members of the school council and Year 6 who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was both thoughtful and helpful.

This is a good school. You are clearly proud of it and so you should be. It is helping you grow up into young people exceptionally well. Older pupils are mature, confident, articulate young people. The school provides you with the skills to do well in your future education. Standards in Year 6 are above average; most of you are making good progress across the school and achieving well. Year 6 is on track to meet the school's targets.

It was good to hear that there is very little bullying and consequently you feel safe in school. It was also good to hear that if you had a problem there is an adult you could approach or that you could drop a note in the box. You told me that you are all friends and we agree that your school is a very friendly school which welcomes and includes new pupils. You behave well. You clearly have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. You clearly enjoy school a great deal because you do such interesting and varied things. There is an outstanding number of clubs, trips and visitors. We agree with the pupils who described the teachers as kind and caring. Aspects of care are outstanding, as some of you who have been helped know very well. All staff work hard on your behalf and you have skilled teachers who want you to do well.

Mr McCarthy and his team have created a good school community and effective teamwork across the school. We have suggested two things to improve the school still more. It would be helpful if staff shared their assessment information with you so that you know what you have to do to get to the next level. We have also asked the headteacher to ensure that when staff judge how effective their lessons are, to focus more on the impact of their work on your learning.

Sincere good wishes for your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector