

Weston-on-Trent CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112896
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311042
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Gill Broadbent

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Rogers
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Salih
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Forrester Avenue Weston-on-Trent Derby DE72 2HX
Telephone number	01332 700 488
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors in one day.

Description of the school

This very popular small school serves families from a wide area. A new building opened in January 2007 providing accommodation and grounds to cater for an increased number of pupils and a new Foundation Stage unit. Children often enter the Foundation Stage with skills above those expected for their age. They enter the Reception class in September and January each year. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds with very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties is average overall but with wide variations in each year group. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible to free school meals. The school holds the Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Reading Connects School, RA Charter School, Eco School and Healthy School Standard awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has some excellent aspects. The smooth transition to the new site was due to the exceptional leadership and management of the project by the headteacher and governors, with the support of staff. The school is making the most of the extra space and high quality resources so that pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. This shows in their positive attitudes and their good attendance. The religious ethos of the school enhances the good care, guidance and support so that pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is excellent. One parent echoed the voice of the vast majority when she wrote 'We are fortunate that our child is getting a very good education and the school is committed to the well-being and development of each child.'

Standards vary from year to year because year groups are small and children have different starting points and needs. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and usually enter Year 1 with skills that are higher than those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. At the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils reach well above average standards in English and standards in reading are very high. Standards are usually above average in mathematics and science. Some pupils do even better than this, especially if they have higher than expected starting points.

Pupil's personal development is good and they become mature, responsible young people who respect adults and each other. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. As a result, they choose to eat healthy meals and take full advantage of all the sports the school offers, which is reflected in the school's awards for promoting healthy lifestyles. Pupils develop excellent social skills and understand how to work collaboratively. This, together with good academic skills, ensures that they are prepared very well for their future lives. They know how to keep themselves safe and they make a good contribution to the school and local community.

An excellent curriculum and consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan lessons that are based accurately on assessments of pupil's learning in all subjects. Well-trained teaching assistants provide good support in lessons. Pupils learn effectively because teaching provides lively, interesting activities and good guidance and support at the right level. Marking provides pupils with very precise direction about what they need to do next to reach their challenging writing targets. In mathematics, although there is good oral guidance given to pupils, marking is not as effective.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher shares her vision for improving achievement with staff and governors so that their teamwork is strong. They are not complacent and continually strive to improve. Procedures for self-evaluation are excellent as demonstrated by the accuracy, depth of analysis and diagnosis of strengths and areas to improve. Actions taken have resulted in improved standards in writing throughout the school. Similar strategies used to raise standards and improve achievement in mathematics show early signs of success in Years 1 to 6. Everyone knows there is more to do in mathematics by using the good procedures for assessment more frequently and tracking pupils' progress even more precisely. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, demonstrating that they have a good capacity to improve further.

The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is excellent. A few parents expressed concern about the conduct of a very small minority of pupils with behavioural problems, especially where there are disproportionate numbers in a particular year group. The school, in partnership with the local authority, is managing this well and uses a wide range of strategies effectively so that disruption is rare and pupils learn effectively.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Reception class is good. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well by the headteacher, who ensures that children have access to high quality equipment, facilities and resources. A gradual introduction prepares children well for full-time education. Therefore, they settle quickly and thrive in the warm relationships between staff and children that create a stimulating, positive environment. Teaching is good because well-planned lessons have an effective balance of direct teaching and independent activities. The staff know the children very well because they constantly check their learning through thorough, accurate observations. Activities are planned to use the outcomes of these checks on their development in all areas of learning and therefore children make good progress. They are very attentive, such as when they learn the order and names of letters of the alphabet. They clearly love taking part in games as they 'follow my leader' outside. The school is well aware that planning in the outdoor area is not quite as detailed as that for activities inside, and this is the next area for development in this newly established Foundation Stage unit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics by checking pupil's progress more frequently and by providing precise written guidance to ensure they reach challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points. The good start that pupils have in their Reception year is built on consistently well in Years 1 to 6. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards in reading remain exceptionally high and writing has improved so that the gap between standards in reading and writing is closing. In science, standards improved in 2007 to above average because pupils had more opportunities to complete practical tasks. In mathematics, fewer pupils reached the higher levels in Years 2 and 6 because they do not do as well in problem solving. The school took swift action to improve this aspect throughout the school so that many pupils are now on track to reach the higher levels in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on important issues and can interpret the relevance of symbols for their deeper meaning. Most pupils enjoy school enormously, which is reflected in lessons and through participation in extra curricular activities. They have a particularly good awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and after school sports clubs provide additional opportunities for exercise and skills building. Pupils understand the importance of being safe and usually act responsibly. They make a positive contribution to the school and wider community through

the school council, playground monitors, well dressing and dramatic performances. Activities such as managing charity fund raisers, snack shop and lessons in finance, prepare them exceptionally well for the next step in their education which is also confirmed by their Basic Skills Quality Mark award. The school accurately identifies that the pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain is good, but not developed as well as other aspects. There are appropriate plans to improve this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The strengths of teaching and learning lie in positive relationships, based on mutual respect between staff and pupils and effective teamwork. This creates a positive environment where pupils are confident to ask and respond to questions to explain things they find difficult. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistent and effective because there are high expectations and a good balance of sanctions and rewards that pupils know well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting activities that often include the use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. Planning based on assessments of pupil's learning, ensures that they make good progress in all subjects. However, some marking in mathematics focuses more on presentation than what pupils need to learn next, so they are not always clear about how to improve in this subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Whilst meeting all of its statutory requirements, the school has also implemented an innovative curriculum. This stresses pupils' responsibilities and pathways to independence through safe lifestyles and healthy living. Carefully considered visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Lessons in money management for older pupils from representatives of a building society, develop their financial understanding well. Off-site residential visits enhance pupil's personal and social development. Provision for reading is very good because it is managed rigorously within school and there is strong parental involvement. The teaching of art and music is also strong and reflects the importance the school places on creativity. Pupils have the opportunity to sing in a choir, learn guitar, keyboards and recorder. They enjoy lessons in French and Spanish enormously and their requests for a Spanish dinner resulted in the cook providing one. However, opportunities to find out about other cultures and customs of people beyond Europe are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Secure systems are in place to ensure pupils' safety, both in school and when they make visits. Good caring relationships and a commitment to pupils' pastoral care create a positive environment in which pupils grow personally and academically. The school works in partnership with the local authority to support pupils who need specialised help. The school deploys additional staff effectively to provide support at the right level for a variety of learning needs. This is particularly the case for pupils with behavioural difficulties, so that they make good progress in improving their behaviour and learning. Through assessments and regular parental contact, the school identifies its gifted and talented pupils. Provision for gifted pupils provides extended tasks in

the curriculum whilst the talented have a range of opportunities including acting, singing, learning musical instruments and playing sports. The school has good systems to assess and track pupils' progress throughout the school in all subjects but guidance through pupils' curriculum targets lack sufficient clarity to be fully effective, especially in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governors have maximised the impact of the new building by creating a new staffing structure, an additional classroom and revising the curriculum organisation. Larger rooms allow space for practical activities. Through the revised staffing structure, staff are enabled to share their expertise and experience, enhancing and enriching the curriculum. Governors challenge the school to ensure that pupils have the support they need to make good progress and they fulfil their responsibilities well. Their direct involvement in curriculum teams shows signs of informing them more effectively about the school's work. The school's priority is to raise standards in mathematics, which was identified as an area to consider improving during the last inspection. Amongst the vast proportion of positive comments from parents a few expressed concerns that the new building has led to less informal contact and swift communication with staff. However, the school has similar procedures for arranging formal and informal meetings between staff and parents to that found in most schools and a good range of communications, which keeps parents well informed.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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 disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 the 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston-on-Trent C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School Weston-on-Trent DE72 2HX

Thank you very much for your welcome and help when we visited you recently. This letter is to tell you about some of the most important things we found out about your school.

Your school is good and some things are excellent. We agree with you that the new building and grounds are fantastic. Everybody has done an excellent job in making sure you had everything ready when it opened. We could see how much you enjoy learning with more space in your classrooms to work and complete activities. You are right to appreciate the staff and the education you receive. You usually reach higher standards than expected for your age and do exceptionally well in reading. Standards in mathematics are improving so that more of you are on track to reach higher levels. You contribute too through your excellent behaviour, maturity and the support you give each other. You told us that a very small number of pupils occasionally do not behave as well as they should. Nevertheless, you recognised that they improve because of the help and support everyone gives them. You play your part by setting them a good example and being helpful at playtimes. In the Reception year, the staff have set up a lovely new unit that is just right for the children.

All of the adults work hard to decide how they can make your school even better. They get it just right. Since the last inspection, standards have really improved in writing and science and you have a new school! The teachers have agreed to improve how they track your progress and help you to do better, especially in mathematics. You can help too by continuing to set an excellent example to other children.

I hope that you continue to enjoy learning in your fantastic new school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Broadbent

Lead inspector