

Westlea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113998
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311444
Inspection dates	5–6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Temple
Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Winslow Crescent Westlea Estate Seaham County Durham SR7 8JU
Telephone number	0191 5813658
Fax number	0191 5813283

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area with high levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. There is a small number of children who are looked after by the council. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold and Activemark Gold 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 is a good school that gives good value for money. Clear and purposeful leadership by the headteacher and a strong, shared commitment by staff and governors to provide only the best for each pupil, are significant factors in their good achievement and personal development.

Achievement is good. Progress is also good and improving. From levels of attainment well below those typical for their ages on entry into school, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. This is built upon and continued in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 6, standards are average.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They feel safe and well looked after. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and make a good contribution to the school, local and wider communities. They behave well and relationships are very good so that they increase in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are interesting and conducted at a brisk pace so that pupils are encouraged to work hard. However, there are inconsistencies in the marking of work consequently pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. Teachers make good use of assessment ensuring work is well suited to challenge pupils of different abilities and backgrounds.

The curriculum is good. It is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors, extra-curricular activities and by a focus on the arts. These help to stimulate interest and bring a relevance to learning. The skills of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) are used well in other subjects to enhance learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities to extend problem solving skills in mathematics by using them in other subjects. The school makes good use of outside agencies and other schools to extend the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are good. This is a very caring school with good links with parents and the local community. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education and they speak warmly of the, 'friendly, approachable and supportive staff'. Good use is made of the recently introduced assessment and tracking system to help teachers and pupils to know what needs to be done to improve. This is helping to increase the rate of pupil progress.

Leadership and management are good and there is a clear, shared vision for improvement. Teaching and learning are regularly checked in order to make improvements and increase the rate of progress. The school evaluates its practice and performance well, leading to clear planning for improvement. Governance is good. Governors play a significant role in holding the school to account for its performance and good use is made of their skills to support the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start because provision in the Foundation Stage is good. They learn in a safe and caring environment. Activities, both indoors and outside are interesting and motivate children, helping them increase their confidence. There is a good balance between directed tasks and those from which children can choose. As a result, children behave well and

their confidence increases. Teaching is good because staff work and plan together as a team. They offer good levels of support and encourage children to become independent. Induction arrangements are good and staff are always available should parents need to discuss issues with them. Teachers make good use of the information from their close observations of children to challenge them and enhance learning. Leadership is good and good links with Key Stage 1 ensure continuity in pupils' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of marking so that pupils know how to improve.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects to help to improve their problem solving skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement of all pupils, whatever their background or ability, is good. Standards are average. Good and improving progress is based on thorough assessment and tracking and good quality teaching. When children enter the Nursery their attainment is well below that which is typical of three-year-olds. They make good progress although by the time they enter Year 1 attainment is generally below what would be expected for their ages. In 2007, the results of the national teacher assessments in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were average which represents good progress from the point of entry to Year 1. Inspection findings show that pupils in the current Year 2 will again reach average standards. In 2007, Year 6 results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science were average. However, pupils in this group did not make the expected progress because there were weaknesses in the systems for assessing and tracking their progress and disruptions within this year group. These have now been remedied and pupils in the current Year 6 make good progress and are on track to reach average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because there is a happy, safe and harmonious environment. Attendance is good. Pupils behave well and have a clear understanding of the benefits of a safe and healthy lifestyle. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council and 'buddies' make a good contribution to the life of the school. Pupils are well aware of the needs of others and are successful in raising money for a range of charities such as their support of a clean water project in the Dominican Republic. They have many opportunities to accept responsibility by carrying out regular duties to assist in the smooth running of the school. Pupils make good progress in the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and their high levels of confidence and self-esteem mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and with some excellent features. Teachers make good use of assessment to ensure that tasks are suited to different abilities and backgrounds. Teaching is usually briskly paced and stimulating and challenges pupils to extend their learning. For example,

outstanding teaching in a history lesson in Year 3 encouraged pupils to use the skills of empathy to explore how Henry VIII would have felt at different stages of his life. In Year 6 the excellent use of drama helped pupils to deepen their understanding of number. Teachers know their subjects well and their infectious enthusiasm helps to motivate pupils to become fully engaged in their learning. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for pupils with specific learning needs, so that they make good progress. Marking is inconsistent and does not provide all pupils with strategies to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced with a good range of enrichment activities. There are lots of visits and visitors and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Good use is made of literacy and ICT skills in other subjects to extend learning and increase its relevance. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop further their skills in numeracy in other subjects, especially by using problem solving skills. Pupils benefit from the school's good partnerships with outside groups and visitors enabling them to experience a wide range of learning opportunities that help to broaden their horizons and understanding of the world. For example, through the school's participation in a national programme of curriculum development pupils have worked with a writer in residence, artists, and musicians and taken part in a school-based multicultural week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding systems are efficiently managed and meet requirements. This is a very caring school where pupils and their families are well known and there are strong links with the local community. The good pastoral care is enhanced by the role of learning mentors. Teaching support assistants effectively help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those looked after outside the home and those who learn English as an additional language and ensures that they make good progress. This is extended by good links with external agencies. The school makes good use of the recently implemented system to track pupils' progress. The valuable information gained is well used to ensure that pupils and teachers know clearly what they need to do to improve and this is helping to increase the rate of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. She has helped to create a learning atmosphere which is calm, enriched and stimulating. In this she is well supported by the senior management team. She has a very clear vision for improvement which is shared by staff and governors so that they work closely together. This leads to good progress and personal development as well as a caring and inclusive community. Good comprehensive and detailed self-evaluation forms the basis of a clear and realistic development plan. For example, the school identified the need to improve its assessment and tracking of progress and the systems now in place contribute significantly to the good and improving achievement of the pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the work of the school. Governance is good. Governors know the school well. They are supportive and play

an important role in holding the school to account for its performance. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Strong leadership, realistic self-evaluation and a shared commitment to improvement give the school good capacity to improve further.

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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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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 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

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	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

9 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westlea Primary School, Durham, SR78JU

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school is good and you are right to feel proud of it. We enjoyed our visit because everyone was kind and polite to us. We were really impressed to find that you know a lot about keeping fit and staying healthy. We think that the school council and buddies do a good job in helping people in school. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well looked after. You behave well and your attendance is good. It is good to see that you help others by collecting for charities.

Here are some of the things your school does well:

- your learning is good because lessons are interesting and make you think;
- there are lots of interesting visits, visitors and after-school clubs and this helps your learning;
- the school keeps a good check on how well you are doing;
- the school is a friendly place and you all get on well with each other.

These are some of the things the school is going to do to get even better:

- improve the marking of your work so that you know how to improve;
- make more use of your mathematics skills in other subjects to help you to solve problems better.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome and courtesy.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector