

# Westlands Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115027
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311795
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Wynford-Jones

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Alison Keen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Bennison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Beeches Close Chelmsford Essex CM1 2SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 251700
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 351473

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than the average primary school serving a socially and economically mixed community. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Although children's attainment on entry is below national expectations for four-year-olds, the proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who speak English as an additional language or who have minority ethnic backgrounds are all broadly similar to the national averages. There is a pre-school on site and externally managed breakfast and after school clubs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides sound value for money. Parents are supportive of the school and say staff are 'friendly and approachable'. School self-evaluation is satisfactory because it is largely accurate in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, inspectors cannot endorse the view that the school's effectiveness is good. The leadership team's judgements are generous, because they do not check the school's practice and outcomes sufficiently robustly against the national picture.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are rising. Most pupils make satisfactory overall progress as they move through the school, but the rate of progress varies between year groups. Although, the results in the 2007 national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6 were barely average, they were a considerable improvement on those of 2006, which were exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. Current standards are close to national age-related expectations in almost all year groups.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but variable. Standards are rising because the recently introduced monitoring system is improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments and raising their expectations. It is also enabling the staff to monitor the progress of all pupils and identify those who are not progressing quickly enough. However, teachers' use of performance information is not equally effective throughout the school. Consequently, some teachers still do not modify the curriculum sufficiently so that it consistently challenges the able and supports those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Although staff are still working hard to consolidate recent improvements in the curriculum, they are already raising standards in English and mathematics and the good range of clubs promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of healthy life styles and staying safe. The quality of pastoral care for pupils is a strength. Staff manage all health and safety matters well. However, collectively, care, guidance and support are no more than satisfactory because pupils are not given consistently clear guidance on how to improve their work independently.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership team has recently taken decisive action to raise standards. The school has reviewed its targets for raising attainment. These are now appropriately challenging and correctly based on the expectation that most pupils should achieve well. The headteacher and the newly appointed deputy work well together and make an effective team. However, the role of the subject co-ordinators is under-developed. They do not monitor and evaluate their subjects sufficiently well or have an accurate view of the school's performance. Governors are supportive and committed to the school but, until recently, they have not challenged the school sufficiently to raise standards. Given recent improvements in standards and to assessment procedures, and the planned ongoing support of the local authority, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Although there is some variation from year to year, most children enter the Reception classes with levels of attainment below those expected for their age, especially in the communication, language and literacy skills. Most make satisfactory progress in their learning, but attainment

is still below national expectations when they begin Year 1. Teachers ensure that children settle quickly to school routines and help them to feel safe and secure and enjoy their activities. The classroom is attractive and welcoming and the quality of education provided is satisfactory. Provision is not yet good because the recently introduced changes in the curriculum are not fully implemented and procedures are still being developed to ensure that assessments are accurate and targets are realistic.

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

- Raise standards and improve the achievement of all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that all teachers use performance information effectively to modify the curriculum and plan lessons that meet the needs of all learners, but especially the higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Improve the guidance given to pupils so that pupils of all abilities understand how to improve their work.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation and improvement planning by giving subject leaders and governors a prominent role in checking standards and quality.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2007 improved considerably on those of 2006. They were much closer to, though still somewhat below, national averages. However, this represented broadly satisfactory achievement, given pupils' below average levels of attainment on entry. In 2007, more pupils in Year 2 exceeded the nationally expected levels and as a result, standards in reading and mathematics were higher than those in 2006. Standards in Year 6 improved markedly in English, mathematics and science. However, weaknesses remain, particularly in writing and mathematics, where too few pupils attained above average standards. The general improvements in standards can be attributed to the recent improvements in the quality and use of teachers' assessments and higher teacher expectations. However, because current practice remains inconsistent, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some of the more able pupils do not perform as well as they should in some classes.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, their enjoyment of art and music supports their cultural development well. Pupils gain a good understanding of being safe and of living healthily. They feel safe, happy and respected. Pupils respond well to adults because relationships are good. Pupils contribute effectively to the school and wider community as members of the school council and through events such as raising money for charity. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. They say they enjoy school and attendance is improving. It is broadly similar to the national average. Pupils' social skills are developing well but the current standards in writing and mathematics, and a lack of independent learning skills hinder pupils' development of skills for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most teachers display interesting and stimulating materials in classrooms. They generally manage pupils' behaviour well through good relationships, which promote pupils' enjoyment and positive views of the school. Teachers consistently make it clear to pupils what they will learn in each lesson, and help them to assess how well they have done. They use resources effectively to add interest to lessons, although in some lessons, teaching assistants are not used as effectively as they could be. There are examples of good and informative marking, but this is not consistent throughout the school, and so many pupils are unclear about how to improve their work independently. The planning of lessons is inconsistent and so does not always match work to pupils' prior attainments. Consequently, the needs of some pupils, particularly the more able, are not fully met and so their progress in some lessons is no more than satisfactory.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum supports pupils' social development and their understanding of healthy living and being safe effectively. Careful thought has gone into curricular planning to ensure that all subjects are covered satisfactorily and that wherever possible, links are made between subjects. Following the previous inspection, the school has invested substantially in improving the resources for information and communication technology, which are used well to support learning. There are a good number and range of after-school clubs, including sports, which the pupils enjoy. Provision in music is good. Specialist tuition and opportunities to play in the steel band and with African drums capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The number of educational visits is modest and the school has plans to increase these and to link them more closely with class topics. The curriculum is satisfactory and not good because it is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of all pupils to ensure they make good progress.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, but have some good features. The school is very committed to ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare, and pastoral care is good. All adults in the school community know pupils well. Consequently, pupils know there is always someone they can turn to if they are in trouble and that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with fairly and effectively. Child protection procedures are thorough and the school accurately identifies any possible risks to pupils' well-being. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff meet current requirements. Links with external agencies, parents and the pre-school are good. The school collects a good amount of assessment information and is now beginning to use it to monitor pupils' progress and to set them learning targets. However, the quality of guidance for pupils has not yet evolved to the point where all pupils understand how to improve their work and can do so with some degree of independence.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school operates well on a day-to day basis. It is a calm and well-ordered environment. The leadership team have successfully focused on promoting pupils' social development and their well-being. They have established an inclusive culture where all are made welcome. Although the school was initially slow to respond to the issues from the previous inspection and standards fell, recent changes are resulting in higher expectations and rising standards. School self-evaluation has improved and is currently satisfactory. However, the leadership team acknowledge that the impact of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is less than it should be and that the school does not evaluate its performance sufficiently robustly against national performance. The governing body ensures statutory requirements are met. Governors are supportive but do not challenge the school sufficiently on the standards it achieves because measures for evaluating the school improvement plan are imprecise.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	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	3
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	3

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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**

23 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westlands Primary School, Chelmsford. CM1 2SB.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We thought that you were very friendly and polite. Your behaviour in class and in the playground was good. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school but surprised that the attendance of so many of you is not as regular as it should be.

We think you are very lucky to go to Westlands Primary School. We were impressed with the building, the lovely grounds and the areas for playing at break and lunch times. We think that the school looks after you well and that you are developing a good understanding of being safe and living healthily. It was nice to see that you have opportunities to play the steel and African drums. We were also pleased that so many of you were using the new computers so confidently.

The education you receive at Westlands Primary is satisfactory, but we believe it can be better. To help you achieve higher standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, we want your teachers to make sure that the lessons they teach are always good, and that the information from checking your work is used to set work that is just right for all of you, whatever your ability. We also want teachers to make sure that you all know how well you are doing and exactly what you need to do to improve your work. To help them do this, we want the subject leaders and the school's governors to check carefully how well the teachers are teaching and the standards you are reaching. We hope that you will do your part by always working hard.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and polite when we visited.

With best wishes

David Wynford-Jones

Lead Inspector