

Westwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115040
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311800
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	282
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beryl Haisman-Baker
Headteacher	Mr John Oakshott
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beresford Close Hadleigh Benfleet Essex SS7 2SU
Telephone number	01702 559467
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average, though with falling rolls. It serves pupils from a mixed residential area west of Southend, in Essex. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meal is well below average, as are the proportions of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds, or with English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school is generally below average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or difficulties, but a lower than average proportion have a statement of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises a single reception class. The school holds the Active Mark and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because the actions of senior leaders have had too little impact on improvement since the last inspection. Longstanding obstacles to raising standards remain. However, some aspects of the school's work are good and it offers an acceptable standard of education. Pupils demonstrate a keen desire to learn but while they attain satisfactory standards by the end of Year 6, this falls short of what they might achieve. Although most parents acknowledge that their children enjoy school, a minority rightly seek signs of stronger leadership. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is, therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the school's inadequate leadership and management, and inadequacies in teaching and progress in Years 3 and 4.

Leadership and management are inadequate. Despite success in promoting good personal development, senior leadership has moved too slowly on crucial issues and actions have had too little impact. Known areas of weak teaching and hence poor progress have persisted for too long and although identified by senior leaders, have not been acted upon successfully. Arrangements for tracking progress have been revised and suitable arrangements are now in place. However, these are new and not used consistently by all staff. Recently the Governing Body has become active in pressing for more rapid change. In this, they sought support from the local authority. The new Chair of Governors provides a valuable link with middle managers and leaders, many of whom are now contributing to school improvement. The school's capacity for further improvement is inadequate.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. They are below national levels in English and mathematics and a little higher in science. As most children's attainment on entering the school has been below national expectations, overall achievement is satisfactory. All make good progress in EYFS and Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 are also broadly average. In contrast, a number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 make too little progress because of inadequacies in teaching. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. A significant proportion of lessons observed were good and a few were outstanding. Where teaching and learning is at its best, relationships are good, attitudes to learning very positive and teachers involve pupils well. In Years 3 and 4, there is evidence of good practice but too much teaching is weak, with ineffective pupil management, slow pace and, at times, an atmosphere coloured more by criticism than encouragement. Pupils of all ages adopt constructive attitudes and become mature, well rounded individuals. Good personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate considerate, polite behaviour, real enthusiasm in most lessons and good collaborative skills. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a result of the care, guidance and support pupils receive. However, care, guidance and support are satisfactory because academic guidance is not as robust as that provided for pupils' social development. Progress has been hindered by the limited confidence of some staff in applying National Curriculum levels to pupils' work, especially in mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good induction for the children and clear planning against all six areas of learning set the scene for good progress in the EYFS. There is a good balance between child-led and adult-led activities so that learning opportunities are used to good effect. Teaching is effective. For example, sessions to develop children's knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters are taught very well by a skilled practitioner. Staff use good assessment procedures, evaluating children on entry and halfway through Reception as well as at the end of the year. Children progress especially well in speaking and listening skills, partly because drama is used regularly and successfully. Their social skills are promoted effectively, in part through routines that involve turn-taking and tidying up. A well-equipped outdoor area is constantly in use and children benefit from the activities offered. Leadership is good: all aspects of provision are well planned and implemented. On a day-to-day basis, staff work well together and create a happy, welcoming atmosphere which the children enjoy and in which they feel safe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve senior leadership to ensure that all staff act swiftly and decisively to improve provision in the school.
- Ensure pupils make good overall progress by improving the use of outcomes of the school's tracking systems.
- Improve teaching standards in Years 3 and 4 to match those in rest of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory and standards broadly average. The majority of children make good progress in the Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2. As a result, attainment closely matches national expectations at the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and Year 4 standards, especially in mathematics, have been significantly below average for the last four years, indicating inadequate progress. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 so that pupils reach broadly average standards. However, test results at Year 6 are lower than the national average in English and mathematics although they are slightly above in science. Recent changes have improved the quality of teaching and learning in Year 3 and 4, but evidence of too much poor progress still exists. New assessment systems for tracking pupils' progress demonstrate some improvements in reading, writing and mathematics, but also highlight how much still needs to be done before progress here can be judged satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds progress at similar rates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning and respond very well to the caring ethos of the school. Staff succeed in creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Relationships between adults and pupils throughout the school are good. Pupils behave very well in most lessons, in the playground and around school. As a result, they feel safe and are happy coming to school. They enjoy school and know how to seek help if they need it. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through the school council. They feel listened to and believe their work on the council makes the school a better place. Their concern for others is shown by the effort

put into supporting charities such as the 'shoebox' campaign to provide Christmas presents for less fortunate children. Pupils are well aware of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical education and using the lunchtime toys for additional physical activity. The school well deserves its Healthy School status and 'Active Mark.' Attendance figures now match national levels. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Weaknesses at Years 3 and 4 are off-set by lessons elsewhere in the school that are good. In the best lessons typically, relationships are positive, pupils are keen to learn and are good at working individually or with others. Teachers are energetic, welcoming and full of praise. Pace is strong and progress rapid. Such teaching characterises the Reception Class and Years 1 and 2. There is some good and satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4, but also a significant proportion that is inadequate. In these lessons, behaviour management is insecure and too few pupils are fully engaged in learning. Work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and progress is limited as a result. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6. Outstanding teaching was seen in some Year 5 and Year 2 lessons where the level of involvement of pupils and the pace were exceptional. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed once lessons are underway, but are not always used effectively at the beginning and end of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory formal curriculum. It has been partly changed so that skills and concepts are more clearly identified, but the process is not complete. There are areas where schemes of work have been customised satisfactorily to meet different pupils' needs, including adjustments to suit mixed-age provision. Specialist provision in swimming, music, religious education and information and communication technology enhance pupils' experience. Good use is made of outdoor spaces and resources such as nearby woodland, a country park, library and historic buildings. Extra-curricular activities are much better than in many schools, with sport especially well provided for. Pupils take up the opportunities in large numbers and their personal skills, especially their confidence, grow as a result. Scope for local and regional competitions is good and the school boasts more than one world champion for their age category in martial arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well supported in developing social skills, although guidance on academic progress varies. Procedures for safeguarding children are effective, meet all current requirements and are reviewed regularly. Child-protection procedures are sound and up to date. The processes for monitoring attendance are good and levels have risen as a result. Marking is used well to praise pupils' work but less often to explain how it could be improved. In some classes, individual tracking and target-setting shows children what next steps they need to take, but practice is inconsistent. Assessment data are being used by a growing number of teachers to evaluate

work and clarify targets, but staff training in use of the school's updated system is relatively recent and levels of confidence vary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. The school has made too little improvement since the last inspection and key problems identified in 2004 remain, particularly the weak progress and teaching in Years 3 and 4. Lack of decisive and effective action in this area has limited the progress of a number of pupils. Self-evaluation is unsatisfactory. While it accurately identifies strong and weak areas, it underestimates the seriousness of problems, and overestimates elsewhere, for instance, in rating its capacity to improve as good. Some gains have been made, such as improved performance in EYFS and in some lower Key Stage 2 classes. Leadership continues to promote good conduct and personal skills well. Use of assessment and tracking systems is increasing, though practice is not fully developed. Leadership offered by middle managers is more effective. Governors, while fully supportive of their school, have recently adopted a more challenging stance on a range of issues. They have also established good links with middle managers. The school has valuable links with other schools. While seeking a higher profile in the local community, it already contributes satisfactorily to the area around it; for instance, through ventures such as support for the nursery development on its land.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

24 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood Primary School, Essex, SS7 2SU

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited Westwood last week. Your politeness and enjoyment of school was commented upon by all the inspectors. We especially liked talking with those of you who came to see us at lunchtime on the first day.

There are many good things happening in the school and a few which need to change. We were impressed with:

- the well-run reception class where all aspects of its work are good
- the good teaching and progress in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. Some lessons in these classes are outstanding
- your good progress in developing personal and social skills
- your good behaviour and much improved attendance
- the way the school gives you so many opportunities to join clubs and activities outside lessons, especially in sport

At the same time, we are concerned that:

- teaching and the progress this helps you to make in Years 3 and 4 are not good enough
- the way staff track your progress is inconsistent
- the school's leaders have not done enough to improve areas of weakness since the last inspection

For this reason, we gave the school a 'Notice To Improve'. This means that inspectors will come to visit your school again quite soon. They have to be sure that senior leaders have taken swift and decisive action on all weak areas. They will need to see that teaching and progress in Years 3 and 4 have improved so much that they match the quality in all the other classes.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Westwood.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Drew (Lead inspector)