

Westborough Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115246 |
| Local Authority | SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LA |
| Inspection number | 311886 |
| Inspection date | 26 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth Frith |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 627 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Mary Lubel |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jenny Davies |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2005 |
| School address | MacDonald Avenue Westcliff-on-Sea Essex SS0 9BS |
| Telephone number | 01702349249 |
| Fax number | 01702390812 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how staff are raising pupils' standards in English, particularly in reading, the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' achievement and personal development. She gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation form, lesson observations, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, information that the school keeps on how well pupils are doing, the school improvement plan and an analysis of the parents' questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very large primary school. Nearly all children live close to the school in an area with higher levels of social and economic disadvantage than found nationally. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is above average. Most children start school with standards well below those usually seen in children of this age and standards in speech, language and communication are exceptionally low. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is above average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need. The school serves a very diverse community, with families coming from a wide range of ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers. An increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language (over 25%) and a significant minority join the school speaking little or no English. A few pupils are looked after by others than their immediate family. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary schooling, which reflects the local transient community.

The following is a sample of awards given to the school in recognition of its work over the last five years:

- National Teaching Awards finalist
- Eastern Region DFES Sustainable Schools Award winners
- International Schools Award - Intermediate
- Active Mark
- Healthy Schools Standard
- Royal Institute of British Architects - Stephen Lawrence Prize
- Royal Institute of British Architects - Best Sustainable New Building

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where the excellent care for each child lies at the heart of its work. Pupils flourish within this vibrant, friendly and supportive environment in which opportunities and experiences are provided that widen their horizons and change their lives. Comments from parents such as 'This is a very special school that is doing some exceptional work', reflect this well. It is clear that pupils, staff, parents and governors thoroughly enjoy being part of the school community.

The school's success stems from the inspirational leadership of the headteacher which is clearly focused on promoting pupils' personal development and raising standards. She shows outstanding commitment to the pupils, their families and the local community and, together with the deputy headteacher, is instrumental in maintaining the strong family ethos. An exceptional lead is given to colleagues who, in turn, work as a strong team sharing her sense of purpose and vision for the school. They are fully committed to Westborough and staff morale is high. Staff take on management responsibilities successfully as duties are well allocated and staff strengths recognised. There are particularly good systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. These reflect the school's consistent drive for improvement and indicate that the school has excellent capacity to improve further. Those in charge have exceptionally high aspirations and expectations of what children can do. The school's self-evaluation is rather modest. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and this gives them the confidence to ask questions about standards, and how they could be improved.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well because teaching is excellent and they respond well to the challenges set. By the end of Year 6, standards are typically average. This shows outstanding progress from very low starting points. The excellent systems to check how well pupils are doing, and a thorough analysis of their work highlighted the need to raise standards in English. In response, a clear action plan and several new initiatives were developed. A focus on correct punctuation and making it 'cool to read' are just two examples of how staff actions are improving standards. Year 6 pupils are working at higher levels than last year's cohort and are in line to meet the challenging targets set.

Staff are particularly effective at creating a relaxed but challenging learning environment where pupils are expected to do their best. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn and very effective assessment and recording procedures ensure that work is well-matched to their needs. Because of this, pupils become confident learners and want to do well. As there is an atmosphere of support, they confidently ask for help from staff and each other when necessary. Those learning to speak English are supported very well and quickly develop the confidence and skills to participate in lessons. Specialist teaching is effective in maintaining high quality lessons. However, more could be done to develop pupils' understanding of themselves as learners, their strengths, preferred ways of learning and areas for improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The strong school ethos creates an environment where pupils feel happy and do particularly well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of an exceptionally high standard. They develop a keen spiritual awareness through many areas of study and through thinking about themselves and their place within the world. Their cultural education is developed particularly well as they discover ways of life and beliefs different from their own, for example, through the annual visit to South

Africa and close links with the local churches and mosque. Pupils learn what is expected of them through their day-to-day interaction with staff and this results in good behaviour and very good relationships. The school is a harmonious community because staff show respect to pupils which, in turn, develops their high self-esteem and respect for others. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a balanced range of food. They develop good personal safety awareness. Many proudly wear anti-bullying badges that they have made. Pupils know their ideas are taken seriously and are constantly suggesting ways to improve the school or help others. Exceptional links with the local community have a very good impact on pupils' personal development. Children have plenty of opportunities to face new challenges such as performing in front of a variety of audiences and working with a range of people. They are very well prepared for their next stage of schooling and beyond. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. They arrive in the morning keen to start the day. Attendance is improving and the school met its targets due to very effective work by staff but some families continue to take holidays in term time.

The innovative curriculum is outstanding and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. There is a buzz of excitement and activity in classes as pupils enjoy their work. Due to an early start to the school day, staff are able to offer over 25 clubs and activities in the afternoons which result in children of all ages working together, learning new skills and developing interests. Children move around the school excitedly to learn Mandarin, use the computers, play in the school band or make a Christmas cake. Such provision has fostered national champions in karate, Irish dancing and chess.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's development in Nursery and Reception is impressive in relation to their starting points. Gains in learning are frequently excellent. Through good observations and discussion with parents, staff quickly recognise children's needs. The curriculum, which focuses particularly well on children's personal, social and emotional development, together with clear expectations and routines, helps children to settle quickly. They become confident and happily play with others. Staff also focus exceptionally well on developing children's communication skills by widening their vocabulary and use of language. Very good organisation in Reception ensures that children have good opportunities to work with adults when developing their early reading, writing and mathematics skills. Because of excellent provision, some children reach the levels expected for their age by Year 1 although many reach lower levels because they have started from such a low baseline.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for all pupils to learn more about themselves as learners.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is 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 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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**

29 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Westborough Primary School and Nursery, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 9BS

You might remember that I came recently to visit your school to see what you were learning and talk to you about your work. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I really enjoyed being in your lessons and watching you learn and play. I think you go to an excellent school and have listed below some of the things that are particularly good.

- You try hard, work very well and make excellent progress. You are proud of Westborough and what you achieve.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and behave well because you are very interested in what you are doing.
- You get on very well with each other and make good friends.
- You love the clubs. I am amazed at the range of things you do.
- You know such a lot about how to stay healthy and safe. You spend your play and lunchtimes very well by getting lots of exercise and keeping fit.
- You support the school and local community very well.
- The staff enjoy being at Westborough as much as you do and work very well as a team to ensure that teaching is excellent.
- You feel safe in school. I was pleased to hear that you know what to do if anyone behaves badly, and talk to a member of staff if you have problems.

Mrs Davies is an excellent headteacher and has lots of ideas to make your school even better. Mrs Bennett, the rest of the staff and governors support her very well. They have agreed that they will focus on helping you to understand ways to learn which suit you best so that you continue to do well. I know you will respond well to their efforts and try as hard as you can.

I left Westborough confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Additional Inspector