

Westover Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116194
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	312208
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judy Knapp
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Gunthorpe
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Westover Road Portsmouth PO3 6NS
Telephone number	02392 660 178
Fax number	02392 655 434

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Westover is a larger than average oversubscribed school. Most pupils live in the immediate area and are of White British heritage. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities has risen since the last inspection and is now above average. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in mixed age classes. The headteacher joined the school in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Westover Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. It has some good features such as its community links. As one parent said, 'Westover has a very strong community, linking the children, staff and parents for the benefit of the children's progress and happiness at school.' Many pupils walk to school. They behave well and are friendly and polite. Attendance is good.

The headteacher has evaluated the school's performance accurately. The headteacher and her deputy are a strong team. Their determined leadership is improving the quality of the school's provision, but more remains to be done. For instance, although the senior leadership team has a good oversight of standards and the quality of education, middle managers are still developing their roles in effectively supporting this work.

Children begin school with the knowledge and skills expected of four year olds. After a good start, they commence Year 1 with attainment often above that expected of five year olds. In 2007 pupils did not achieve well enough by the end of Year 2; their standards were below average in writing and too few pupils achieved the higher levels in reading. These pupils' needs have been addressed well in Year 3 and they are catching up well. Sounds and letters are now taught more effectively and expectations are higher so that Key Stage 1 pupils are now achieving at least satisfactorily and often well. In 2007, pupils achieved satisfactorily by the end of Year 6. Standards in English were above average and broadly average in mathematics and science. Because fewer pupils attained the higher levels in science, the school has improved planning, which is resulting in better teaching and pupil achievement. In spite of recent improvements to the English curriculum, writing standards remain below those achieved in reading.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. Recent improvements mean that there is some good teaching and learning in all year groups and in 'catch up' lessons. The impact of this improved provision is beginning to be seen in pupils making better and more consistent progress throughout the school. Although pupils are taught in sets for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, some work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs to provide sufficient challenge so that they achieve well.

Pupils enjoy school because of many exciting activities. For example, Year 6 girls are building racing cars with Year 8 pupils from the local secondary school. Exceptional links with a wide range of organisations contribute very well to pupils' learning, care and support. Music and sporting opportunities are strong. Pastoral care and support for pupils is good, particularly for those with physical disabilities. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' learning and for those who need help managing their emotions and behaviour. This ensures that these pupils learn satisfactorily and other pupils' learning is not interrupted.

Pupils appreciate the helpful way that teachers mark their work. Some use the targets they are set to help them improve their work. This works particularly well in writing, but is not yet consistently established in all classes.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. It is carried out thoroughly by senior leaders but the governing body and other leaders are not fully involved. Capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into the school. They feel secure and gain confidence quickly. They negotiate tasks and co-operate well with others. Social and emotional development is rapid. Teaching and learning are good because staff understand well the needs of young children and devise activities that stimulate their curiosity and promote their independence. In particular, the 'Plan, Do and Review' programme provides many opportunities for children to think for themselves and make decisions about their own learning. The staff pose relevant and stimulating questions and extend the children's thinking to encourage further exploration. As a result, children make good progress so that by the time they start in Year 1, most children are working securely within the Early Learning Goals. In order to improve children's progress in reading and writing, where their starting points are relatively lower, letters and sounds are now taught more systematically and children's progress is rigorously tracked. Although the outdoor area has improved since the last inspection it is under used and does not allow for free access throughout the day. Good relationships are established with parents and carers and there are good arrangements to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in writing, by ensuring work in lessons is more closely matched to the abilities of the pupils.
- Increase the consistency and use of target setting so that all pupils know how to improve.
- Sharpen the roles middle managers play in leading their areas of responsibility, in monitoring and evaluating provision and in checking on pupils' progress.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has set challenging targets for improvement over time and is now rigorously tracking pupils' progress so that any underachievement is identified and addressed promptly. Thus, whilst the 2007 assessments for Year 2 show that standards were below average and especially weak in writing, the school has improved teaching and pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. Inspectors' analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers mark pupils' work well and give good pointers for improvement that pupils appreciate. Consequently pupils are building systematically on their knowledge and developing their skills satisfactorily. Year 6 pupils taking the national tests in 2007 achieved above average standards in English and broadly average standards in mathematics and science. The current Year 6 are making steady progress and achieving satisfactorily in relation to the results they achieved as seven-year-olds. Appropriate support and resources are provided for pupils with physical disabilities and learning and behavioural difficulties so that overall they achieve in line with other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles, including enjoying extra curricular sporting activities. Enthusiasm for school is evident in their positive attitudes to learning. One pupil

explained, 'It's one of the most friendly schools I have been in'. Pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if they have a problem. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and learn that though people choose to express their faith differently each should be respected. Pupils contribute well to the running of their school by readily taking on responsibility. For example, pupils answer the telephones and older pupils help the younger ones. Pupils are now leading a school council project on improving the use of the playground and lunchtime activities. They participate in fund raising for a range of charities, such as 'Faith in Football'. Pupils take responsibility for saving and banking their own money in the school bank, run by parent volunteers in partnership with a Portsmouth bank. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Classrooms are harmonious and relationships are good between adults and pupils and consequently pupils learn in a positive productive environment. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Their subject knowledge is good. The effective use of systems that enable pupils to know whether they have been successful in their learning at the end of a lesson is having a positive impact on their achievement. Much of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good or better. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning because expectations about what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and the tasks set for pupils are not always well matched to their abilities. There has been a reduction in the use of worksheets in mathematics in most classes. However, in some classes pupils do not have enough opportunities to record their work independently. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops when teachers talk too much and pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The full impact of recent work to provide more opportunities for reading, involving parents, and interesting and exciting writing tasks, is yet to be seen. Adjustments to the science curriculum have led to improved progress this year. Good 'catch up' lessons led by highly skilled teaching assistants lead to good pupil progress. Opportunities to take part in circus and art weeks and many visits and visitors broaden pupils' experience and raise their awareness of a wide range of subjects and issues. As a result of the exceptional links with many external organisations, pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in a wide range of clubs and other activities. Good links are made between subjects, for example, opportunities to practise writing skills in other subjects, but the school recognises that there is more to do. The use of information and communication technology by pupils and staff is often good, for example, pupils used programmable devices in a mathematics lesson on coordinates, which made their learning exciting. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, as seen in the positive pupil outcomes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding and protecting children are securely in place. Parents are mostly very positive about the school and agree that their children are looked after well. Effective means of dealing with bullying and racism are in place and recorded incidents are few. As one pupil said, 'There is no bullying in this school'. A few parents raised concerns about provision for children with learning difficulties. However, inspectors found that pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in their education. The school has close links with other professionals to supplement the school's provision in order to make sure that pupils are receiving suitable help. Pupils' progress is now tracked regularly but systems are new and the impact of this work is yet to be seen in good pupil progress. Target setting is not used consistently in all classes so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Capacity to improve is satisfactory because senior leaders have identified underachievement and ensured that pupils have good support so they are catching up. There is a strong commitment to school improvement and the school improvement plan is focussing on the correct areas. Teaching and learning are improving well because of effective monitoring by senior leaders. Other leaders are often very knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility or subjects and are beginning to use data well to check on pupils' progress. However, they are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility although the school has planned some training opportunities for them. There is a full complement of governors but some are new to their roles, including the chair. They challenge satisfactorily in meetings and know and support the school well. The school values parents' views and regularly surveys them.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 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	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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westover Primary School, Portsmouth, PO3 6NS

Thank you very much for helping us during the inspection, particularly by talking to us about your school and all the opportunities that it offers you. We were particularly impressed by your friendliness and politeness and how your school is at the heart of your community.

Here are the other things that we liked best about your school.

- You enjoy school and come to school regularly and on time.
- You behave well.
- Your school offers you a particularly wide range of exciting opportunities to learn in school and at other times because it has exceptionally good links with many other organisations.
- You are learning satisfactorily. Your classrooms are pleasant places to learn in and you have good relationships with adults in school.
- Teachers take good care of you and ensure that if you have any physical disabilities or behavioural and learning needs, help is provided. You know whom to talk to if you are worried about anything.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- You are developing well personally and understand about staying healthy and keeping safe. You contribute well to your school community by taking on responsibility for jobs and also to the wider community by, for example, fund raising.

We have asked your school improve your target setting system that helps you improve your work so that you can also work better on your own. We have asked teachers to ensure that your work is always hard enough so that you can do your very best. We have asked the school to make sure that everyone associated with the school has the opportunity to check on its work regularly so that the school can become even better.

I would like to send you my best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Richmond

Lead Inspector