

# Westmeads Community Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118363
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312910
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julian Oliver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Beale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cromwell Road Whitstable CT5 1NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 272995
<b>Fax number</b>	01227 280459

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<b>Age group</b>	4-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' personal development and achievement. The inspector met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. 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 the report.

## Description of the school

Children join this small school with a wide range of capabilities but they are average overall. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is average. In September 2006, the school had an Ofsted survey visit to look at innovation in its curriculum.

## 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 pupils are helped to grow in confidence, and where they do not just do well in English and mathematics, but also achieve very well across a very broad range of other subjects. Parents describe Westmeads as 'very well run'. They especially like the way the school keeps them so very well informed and fully involves them in their children's education. School leaders have been remarkably successful in creating a stimulating learning environment where every pupil feels valued and is encouraged to succeed in all they do. Parents strongly appreciate this. They comment particularly on the 'superb atmosphere', and one summed up the views of many in saying, 'We feel extremely lucky that our daughter is able to attend such a creative, inspiring and inclusive school'.

What stands out in this school is the imaginative curriculum which parents praise as 'highly innovative' in the way it encourages pupils to learn for themselves through problem-solving. Parents appreciate the many varied activities that excite their children. They like the way 'the school recognises that children's learning goes on in many different ways'. Teaching is particularly effective because teachers offer pupils activities that are tailored to the way their pupils learn best, whether through, for example, looking, listening or practical involvement. Although work is usually well matched to pupils' different capabilities, this is not always the case. Sometimes pupils are given tasks that are not pitched at the right level and, where this occurs, they do not make such rapid progress.

Overall, however, pupils make outstanding progress from their start in the Reception Year to the time they leave at the end of Year 2. Many parents describe their children's progress as excellent and all are very happy that their children are 'learning lots'. As was observed in the recent Ofsted survey report, pupils have particularly strong speaking and listening skills. Standards in the Year 2 tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average since the last inspection. Pupils' good key literacy and numeracy skills, coupled with their very strong social skills and enthusiasm for learning, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Pupils with learning difficulties make outstanding progress. As a parent explained, in relation to their son's experience, this is due to 'brilliant support in areas he finds difficult. As a result, he loves being at school and is very proud of his achievements'.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and describe lessons as being 'fun'. Parents comment that 'the children always come out with a smile on their faces'. They praise the way their children are 'nurtured to give them confidence to speak out'. The school certainly does not turn out shrinking violets. Pupils are not shy about expressing their views, even if that sometimes results in them chanting their opinions. They have a good opportunity to play a part in the school community, for example as school councillors. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They get on very well with each other and they work with industry and concentration. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average.

Pupils have an impressive understanding of the need for exercise and a healthy diet, thanks at least in part to the 'yummy food' they have at school. A parent pointed out that the school 'had even managed to get my daughter to try new food at lunchtime – something she won't do at home'. Pupils feel safe in school because they are extremely well cared for. All have targets that show them what they need to do to improve their work. They evaluate how much they have enjoyed their work, and why, and older pupils use a 'Riskometer' to assess whether they

have pushed themselves enough. However, they are not all as involved as they could be in assessing the quality of their own and each other's work.

The headteacher, senior leaders, staff team and governors have a very clear and accurate picture of the school's many achievements but there is no sense of complacency in their ambition and drive for further improvement. It is this, and the school's sustained success, that shows its outstanding capacity to continue to develop and improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception Year. They settle quickly to learning and following the school's orderly routines, and their personal and social development is particularly impressive. This is due in no small part to the very well planned programme of visits, both to children's pre-schools and to their homes, before they start school. Parents speak especially highly of these arrangements. Several said how these were 'really beneficial and put my child at ease'. One explained that initially her son was 'not very keen to start school because he hadn't enjoyed nursery very much, but with the staff's help, he was rapidly transformed and he now enjoys school very much'. Children make excellent progress through their Reception Year. Almost all attain, and a great many exceed, the early learning goals expected for their age.

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

- Ensure that activities in lessons are always well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Give pupils more opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	1
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



## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westmeads Community Infant School, Whitstable CT5 1NA

Thank you for making me so welcome today when I came to visit your school. I could see how proud you are of your school, and your parents told me they thought the school was doing an excellent job. They are right. Westmeads is an outstanding school.

I was impressed with how much you are learning about so many different things, so that you are not just doing well in reading, writing and mathematics. You enjoy the work you do in finding things out for yourselves and solving problems, and this will give you all a very good start when you move on to junior school.

I was very pleased to see how well behaved you are and how well you all get on. Even the youngest children in the Reception classes have quickly learnt what they should be doing. You feel very safe at school because the school looks after you so well and expects you to be kind to each other. Some of the school councillors told me all about healthy food – so I shall have to watch what I eat for supper!

Your school is very well run and you do so well because there is so much super teaching. Sometimes some of you are given things to do in lessons that are not at the right level for you. I have asked the school to look at this. I was impressed with the way you get a chance to comment on lessons through the 'Joyometer' and 'Riskometer' but I have asked the school to look at other ways of getting you involved in checking your own and each other's work so that you can see how well you are achieving your targets.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Best wishes,

Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector

**Annex B**



10 October 2007

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Selwyn Ward  
Lead Inspector