

Westbury School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122966
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	314443
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Spencer
Headteacher	Mr John Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Chingford Road Bilborough Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG8 3BT
Telephone number	01159 155858
Fax number	0115 9155 855

Age group	7–16
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Inspection number	314443

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school caters for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. Before joining the school, most pupils have been permanently excluded at least twice from mainstream schools and have significant gaps in their education. As a result, standards are well below those found in mainstream schools. Currently, no girls are on roll. There are several looked after children at the school. One in five pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Through the local authority's review of its special schools, Westbury has almost doubled in size in the past three years. At the time of the previous inspection, there were no primary-aged pupils. There are now five. In July 2007, the school became a National Support School and the headteacher is a National Leader in Education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding elements within most aspects of its work. Pupils say that 'the time goes quickly because we are always busy'. In fact, each day is packed with activity and not a moment is wasted. A good curriculum makes a very significant contribution to pupils' good personal development. Though sometimes loathe to admit it, they enjoy work such as building a wall or coming up with ideas for new technologies. Because they are so well motivated, pupils are usually willing to persevere with tasks and try hard to do as well as they can. Behaviour is good. Most pupils respond very positively to the school's efforts to enable them to control their emotions and behave in line with its very high expectations. Lessons generally run smoothly and the school is largely calm and orderly. Pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They have many opportunities to be physically active and frequently opt for sports when choosing activities, for example, at lunchtime. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are rigorous and comprehensive, forming the core of the good quality care, guidance and support provided. As a result, pupils comment that they feel safer at Westbury than in their previous schools.

Excellent partnerships with a variety of agencies enhance the school's work with, for instance, looked after children or pupils who are carers. Lessons in citizenship, enterprise activities and fund-raising events are extremely successful in encouraging pupils to contribute to the school and wider community. For example, pupils presented benches they had made from recycled wood to a local care home. A significantly effective and growing feature of the curriculum is the provision of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. This important development has been spearheaded by the headteacher as part of his fervent commitment to equipping pupils as well as possible for their lives beyond school. Pupils appreciate the way in which Westbury does its best to provide them with similar opportunities to those available in mainstream schools. They mention in particular the wide range of GCSE courses, remarkable in such a small school. However, music is not taught on a regular basis in Years 2 to 9 because the school has been unable to recruit a teacher with suitable skills.

Westbury works very hard to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. These efforts are not enough to secure satisfactory levels of attendance. A significant minority of pupils are persistent absentees, some for reasons totally beyond the school's influence. Most pupils do take advantage of the fresh start provided by joining Westbury. After extensive periods of absence, usually owing to exclusion from previous schools, they often attend regularly and do their best to make up for lost time.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Some make remarkable progress and are successful in a variety of accredited courses, including gaining GCSE passes at high levels. Pupils who attend regularly achieve as well as this because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities and resources are chosen carefully to motivate pupils and promote learning. However, lessons do not always take enough account of what individuals have learned already. Tasks sometimes broadly meet the needs of the class group but may be too hard or easy for particular pupils. Leadership and management are good overall and the headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He leaves staff, governors, parents and carers in no doubt about his extremely high aspirations for the school and each pupil. Strong management structures support these goals, leading to good improvement since the previous inspection and an equally good capacity to continue to move forward. Parents think very highly of the school. Understandably, one carer singled out for special praise the school's 'never give up on a child' attitude.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve rates of attendance.
- Make full use of teachers' assessments of pupils' learning so work is always matched accurately to what they need to learn next.
- Ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to learn music in Years 2 to 9.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

More pupils meet or exceed their individual targets than fail to reach them. Poor attendance is usually the reason why some pupils leave school without gaining the accreditation of which they are capable. Nevertheless, in 2007, all Year 11 pupils were successful in at least one accredited course. Most gained a variety of accreditation, such as the Youth Award Scheme at bronze or silver challenge level, Entry level or GCSE grades. Other qualifications included Level 1 or 2 in construction or vehicle technology (each equivalent to five pass grades at GCSE level). Previous disruptions to pupils' learning often have a particularly adverse effect on their literacy levels and hence on other subjects. Progress for all age groups is frequently slower in English than in mathematics but is improving owing to a concerted effort by staff. Pupils become very confident users of information and communication technology (ICT). Their practical skills develop especially well and are reflected in good quality outcomes throughout the school in subjects such as design and technology. Looked after children and pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others who have similar levels of attendance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils make extremely good progress in the skills needed to prepare them for their future lives, enabling them to move on to employment or college courses. For example, cooperating with others and listening carefully to instructions, help pupils in Years 10 and 11 to be successful during work experience placements. They acknowledge that some bullying occurs but feel able to deal with this personally or by talking with staff. Exclusions and physical interventions by staff, necessitated by exceptionally challenging behaviour, are reducing and few racist incidents are reported. Pupils, including those of primary age, take some responsibility for their own safety, for instance, by learning to handle tools and equipment correctly. School councillors are becoming increasingly effective as one of the governors helps them to become better able to represent the views of other pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Residential visits enable pupils to face physical challenges, support each other, and appreciate the natural world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Very positive relationships with teachers and teaching assistants make significant contributions to managing pupils' behaviour. Staff make their expectations clear and respond quickly and calmly to maintain order. More often, pupils are praised for their efforts and achievements, so they are willing to cooperate and participate in activities. Teachers make sure pupils understand the purpose of each lesson. They do not always adjust these objectives or the planned activities

to cater for different groups of pupils, for example, faster or slower learners. This prevents pupils learning at the best possible rate. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, giving clear explanations, for instance. They often use assessments of learning well, for example to determine the examination courses pupils follow. Pupils are regularly given good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. For instance, following a visit to a zoo, primary-aged pupils greatly enjoyed reading and writing as they created an ICT presentation to illustrate their work on endangered species.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In most respects, the curriculum is matched particularly well to pupils' needs. For instance, timetables in Years 10 and 11 include both vocational and GCSE or Entry level courses. In addition there are crucial elements such as personal, social, health and citizenship education and work-related learning. The newly developed primary years' curriculum is relevant and well planned. Throughout the school, there is a strong and fitting focus on the key subjects of English, mathematics and ICT. Additional sessions to boost literacy skills have recently been introduced to help pupils with the most ground to make up. Lunchtime pursuits, daily lessons where pupils choose their activities, and visits in the locality and further afield contribute very well to learning and personal development. Through these, pupils have musical experiences from time to time, but they do not follow a structured programme in music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All the necessary arrangements to safeguard pupils are securely in place. Staff receive regular updates in key areas such as child protection and physical intervention. Potential risks to health and safety are assessed carefully and given due consideration, for instance, when arranging work experience placements. Senior staff are available to provide support when pupils' behaviour is particularly challenging. Daily briefings enable staff to share information about individuals and the best ways to manage them. The carefully constructed rewards system successfully encourages positive attitudes. Pupils acknowledge that rewards are 'worth having' and save up points, for example, to go cycling on forest tracks. Links with parents and carers are very strong and the school is in regular contact with them. They are consulted over their sons' targets and urged to work in partnership with the school. Pupils rightly say that teachers mark their work helpfully and they are aware of the levels and grades they are expected to achieve. Efforts to improve attendance are extensive and the school takes a strong line when parents condone absence. Nevertheless, attendance is not good enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sees to it that the school is recognised as an example of effective and innovative practice in a number of respects. For example, Key Stage 3 pupils' work on the environment has led them to develop a wind turbine which will power the ICT resources in the vocational workshop. Senior staff provide strong support and carry out significant responsibilities conscientiously. Governance is good. Governors contribute markedly to monitoring the school's work and provide practical support. The written plans for improving the school further stem from extremely accurate self-evaluation, which involves all staff. Information related to pupils'

behaviour is now handled electronically, enabling it to be analysed more efficiently. Academic assessments are stored in a similar way but without the potential to quickly identify trends and make comparisons between subjects. When issues such as the relatively slower progress made in English are identified, leaders take firm action to tackle these. Developments such as the vocational workshop have significantly enhanced the curriculum and outcomes for pupils, helping to ensure that the school provides good value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	4
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

14 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westbury School, Bilborough, NG8 3BT

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and would now like to let you know the results of the inspection.

I was impressed by your personal development, especially the improvements in your behaviour, your contributions to the community, and the way in which most of you are extremely well prepared for moving on to jobs or college when you leave school. However, attendance levels are much too low. A few pupils are prevented from attending by their personal circumstances but in most cases, there is no good reason why particular pupils are not in school. I have asked the school to keep trying to improve attendance but the main responsibility lies with you and your parents and carers.

Those of you who do attend regularly make really good progress. I was delighted with the range of certificates achieved in Years 10 and 11. These pupils should be very proud and so should your teachers, who are all doing a good job. They provide you with lessons that are useful and interesting. Occasionally, work is too difficult or too easy for certain pupils and I would like the teachers to make sure that all of you have to work that is at the right level of difficulty. A lot of the curriculum at Westbury is first-rate. For instance, not all schools can offer lessons in vehicle technology. However, music is not taught, and it should be.

Your headteacher sees to it that the school keeps improving. He, the governors and the staff want the very best for each one of you. I think you are lucky to go to such a good school. With the opportunities you are given, the sky is the limit. I want to send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Eaton

Lead inspector