

# Westover Green Community School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123733        |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Somerset      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 314697        |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 2–3 July 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Paul Sadler   |

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>                     | Primary                                 |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 306                                     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Andy Jones                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Heather Good                            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 28 June 2004                            |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Westover Green<br>Bridgwater<br>TA6 7HB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01278 422943                            |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01278 446003                            |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of mainly social housing. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is twice the national average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also high. Most pupils are of White British ethnicity. A small proportion speak languages other than English at home. The school provides breakfast and after school care and has close links with the pre-school on the site. The headteacher took up her post in September 2007.

## 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 in which pupils achieve well. As parents said, 'Westover Green School is a name to trust,' a view echoed by others. Notable strengths include the outstanding behaviour of the pupils, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the excellent quality of the Foundation Stage (Reception). In spite of modest levels of attendance, often due to family issues, pupils greatly enjoy their learning. They also make an outstanding contribution to both the school and wider communities.

Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that are well below those expected. They make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, while standards of reading, writing and mathematics are below average, pupils have made good progress. This continues in Years 3 to 6, and by the end of Year 6 the proportions attaining the national standard in English, mathematics and science are average, although the numbers attaining the higher level are small.

In 2006, standards at the end of Year 6 were very low. The local authority correctly identified the school as needing additional help, as a result of which standards rose dramatically in 2007. Under the dynamic leadership of the new headteacher, further excellent improvements have been made, with reduced levels of support from the local authority. The school correctly identified that, in addition to continuing to raise standards, improving pupils' behaviour and the quality of the Foundation Stage were high priorities. Both these aspects of the school's work are now outstanding, indicating that the school has made excellent improvements recently and is in an excellent position to continue to improve. The school's leaders have a good understanding of its strengths and relative weaknesses. The headteacher has very good support from her deputy and other senior staff, the morale of staff is high and the governing body is developing its role well.

Pupils' good progress is due to consistently good teaching in which teachers plan tasks that are generally well matched to pupils' abilities. This is especially so for those with learning difficulties, who receive very good support from teaching and learning assistants and hence also make good progress. To quote parents, 'Our daughter, who has severe learning difficulties, has made excellent progress.' However, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and lessons proceed at a good pace. Marking is good, with helpful comments, and pupils are also set targets for improvement, but they have limited opportunities to assess their own progress and hence do not fully understand how to improve their work. Pupils enjoy the good curriculum with a range of visits and visitors and interesting activities such as international week, but in some subjects there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and to understand the links between the things they learn.

Pupils are cared for very well and they and their families receive excellent support. Parents greatly value the opportunities to learn with their children and the very good support offered by the home-school liaison officer, who 'puts in a lot of time to help me and my children', to quote a parent. The school's excellent links with welfare agencies and with other schools also contribute well to their care. The school meets all requirements to keep children safe.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. Many start school with few skills and limited knowledge but by the end of the year most attain the goals set for children of their age and some exceed these levels. They make especially good progress in their communication skills and in their social and emotional development. Children are guided very well to make appropriate choices from the wide range of exciting activities on offer, and greatly enjoy learning and playing with their friends. The dedicated team of staff provide excellent teaching, care and guidance for the children. They learn both indoors and outdoors in an exciting environment which has recently been refurbished. There are excellent links with the pre-school on the site, which many of the children attend. Staff have achieved particular success in managing the potentially challenging behaviour of some children. The leadership of the deputy headteacher has led to rapid improvements in the Foundation Stage over the last year.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards attained by the most able pupils by providing them with more challenging activities, especially in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils understand how to assess their own progress and use marking and the process of setting targets to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 improved considerably in 2007 and there is good evidence of further improvement in 2008. By this age, most pupils can read fluently and many can write in accurate sentences using good quality handwriting. Few, however, attain the higher level in national assessments. This pattern is also evident at the end of Year 6, where there is evidence that three quarters of the pupils this year will attain the nationally expected standard in English, mathematics and science. A very high proportion of pupils make better than expected progress in Years 3 to 6, representing good progress overall. With the exception of a small number of more able pupils, all pupils achieve equally well. Especially pleasing is the evidence from many books of extended, accurate and interesting work from pupils who clearly do not find the tasks easy. There is evidence of work of a high standard in other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, music and physical education (PE).

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Much of the school's success in promoting pupils' good personal development and well-being stems from the outstanding work done to improve behaviour in the school. This has, for instance resulted in exclusions in the current year reducing to 10% of the previous year's level. The many strategies adopted to develop a calm, caring ethos that respects personal qualities and differences has led to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The many happy faces of the pupils are a notable feature of the school. They make an excellent contribution to the community, for example by looking after younger pupils, as members of the school council, which has initiated a network of school councils of local schools, and by putting on shows for parents and family. While a small proportion of pupils have poor attendance,

the school does all it can to rectify this, for instance by continually sending text messages to the parents of absentees. Pupils are especially excited about a promised limousine ride for those recording full attendance in the current year. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and the skills that they will need in later life, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are developing well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good throughout the school, and in the Foundation Stage, it is excellent. Teachers have consistently high expectations that pupils will behave well and work at a good pace. Hence, classrooms have an industrious atmosphere characterised by excellent relationships. Discussions between pupils are especially effective in developing their understanding of the task. Resources including ICT are used well to make lessons interesting. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught especially well, in some cases due to excellent links with a nearby special school, but in the majority of cases due to very good planning by the teacher and very effective support from teaching and learning assistants. In a few cases, teachers do not make sufficient checks that pupils understand the tasks, and sometimes opportunities to stretch the most able pupils are missed. This is not always the case, however, as when Year 2 pupils discussed alliteration in the poetry of Roger McGough.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

While the need to raise standards has placed an understandable emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the curriculum, pupils are taught the full range of required subjects. Recent improvements include altering the timing of trips and visits to ensure that pupils can make full use of the experience in their learning. There is a very good range of additional activities as varied as sport and gardening, and good use is made of links, for instance with a nearby village school, to widen pupils' experience of the world. Pupils showed huge enthusiasm for a challenge issued by the headteacher based on the television show 'The Apprentice'. Opportunities for pupils to develop skills through other subjects, or to understand how subjects link together, are limited, but the school has correctly identified this as an important area for future development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has excellent links with parents who value the wide-ranging support the school offers. Pupils receive outstanding care and support appropriate to their varied needs. Very good links with social and welfare services mean that issues that arise can be dealt with quickly and effectively. 'Family learning' initiatives enable parents to develop their own skills alongside their children. The school provides satisfactory breakfast and after school care, although these are not linked to similar services offered elsewhere in the community.

Pupils are offered academic guidance in the form of marking and targets that is satisfactory but they have insufficient opportunities to assess their own work and hence have a limited understanding of how to use the guidance to improve it.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leaders have a relentless focus on raising standards and improving the quality of education the school provides. This reflects a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has led to tremendous improvement over the last two years. They set targets which, although modest in the past, are increasingly demanding and are usually achieved. Targets set to improve behaviour have been especially effective. Subject and other middle leaders provide good leadership, and their skills of monitoring and evaluation are improving under the headteacher's guidance. The governing body has remedied past weaknesses and provides strong support, with governors becoming more skilled at holding the school to account. Recent training has given staff greater confidence in their own abilities and in what their pupils are capable of achieving. Development planning is more effective than in the past, although plans have too many priorities and some lack clear measures of success.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |

### 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 |

<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>                                       | 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

Dear Pupils

Westover Green Community Primary School, Bridgwater TA6 7HB

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We especially enjoyed talking to you as we found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly. We especially enjoyed seeing your DVD about 'The Apprentice'.

Yours is a good school which has improved a lot recently. These are some of the most important things about it:

- Your behaviour is outstanding. We realise some of you need help to behave well and the staff and other pupils do all they can to help. This works very well.
- The Foundation Stage (Reception) gives you an excellent start to your education.
- Almost all of you make good progress and by the time you reach Year 6 standards are in line with national averages.
- Those of you who sometimes find learning difficult get the help you need and make good progress.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to take part in, like the Talent Show, the Limousine Ride for good attendance, and 'The Apprentice'.
- You have lots of good links with other schools and we were very impressed that you set up a network of local school councils.
- Teaching is good. Teachers expect you to work hard, and you do.
- You told us that you really enjoy school and we noticed how much children smile.
- The staff care for you very well and also help your families when there are problems.
- The headteacher, other staff and governors lead the school well, and are really good at making things even better for you.

We have asked the school to give those of you who are good at school work some work that is even more challenging, and to help you to use your targets and the teachers' marking to improve your work even more. You can help by always coming to school unless you are ill, and by politely telling the teacher if you find the work too easy or if you do not understand how to improve it.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

14 July 2008



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Paul Sadler  
Lead Inspector